

Duke
Ellington
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DUKE
ELLINGTON



Helen E. [Signature]

DUKE ELLINGTON

BY
BARRY ULANOV



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NEW YORK

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IN CRITICAL ARTICLES AND REVIEWS.

TO THE OLD GUARD,
TOBY AND SONNY AND
FREDDIE AND TRICKY
AND HARRY,
FOR THEIR MUSIC
AND THEIR SPIRIT

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AMERICAN BOOK-STRATFORD PRESS, INC., NEW YORK

The Duke as Master of Ceremonies: the immaculate dress, the happy smile, the relaxed hands are typical.



CONTENTS

(All chapter titles are Ellington song titles)

INTRODUCTION	ix
I. WASHINGTON WOBBLE	1
II. FLAMING YOUTH	12
III. DROP ME OFF IN HARLEM	26
IV. ECHOES OF THE JUNGLE	41
V. THE DUKE STEPS OUT	57
VI. COTTON CLUB STOMP	66
VII. REMINISCING IN TEMPO	81
VIII. PYRAMID	97
IX. HARLEM RIVER QUIVER	113
X. HIGH LIFE	130
XI. DALLAS DOINGS	152
XII. STEPPING INTO SWING SOCIETY	159
XIII. MAIN STEM	180
XIV. SADDEST TALE	201
XV. SMORGASBORD AND SCHNAPPS	209
XVI. WEELY	218
XVII. JUMP FOR JOY	239
XVIII. BLACK, BROWN AND BEIGE	247
XIX. SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR	262
A COMPLETE DUKE ELLINGTON DISCOGRAPHY	277
INDEX	313



Merceer Ellington
(above, right) at ten
follows his father's
example. (The other
boy is a friend.)

J. E., Duke's father,
proud of his boy's New
York success, poses with
son in late 1923. Freddie
and Uncle Ed were at-
tentive to the same de-
tail—the florid tiepin.
All three assumed care-
ful hands-in-pocket in-
formality for the photo,
one of the few ever
taken of Duke's father.



Duke at 10; even then ur-
bane in look and in dress.



Just before leaving Washington for New York, Duke left this memento of good living for his friends and his family.





First flush of success, first New York apartment, expensive cigar (he no longer smokes them), dressing gown.



Mercer forms his band and he and Father Duke go over his library together, flashing the same smile for the camera.



The first successful Ellington concert was given at Colgate University, with Duke playing against the solemn background of the chapel's organ pipes.

Glee and athletic prowess mix in Duke's first movie lot appearance (1930) as the *Check and Double-Check* chorus chases the handleader across RKO's Hollywood acres.





Rex Stewart



The late
Arthur Whetsol



The late
Jimmy Blanton



Tricky Sam (Joe)
Nanton



Duke leans across the reeds at a record session to explain a voicing to Johnny Hodges. Al Sears (with glasses) and Jimmy Hamilton (turned from camera) await Johnny's expected variations on Ellington's verbal theme.



Cat Anderson (*left*), whom Duke calls "my phenomenon," hits a seemingly impossible note, in a Yankee Stadium appearance of the band. Cat always points to the note in the air as he makes it. That's Hayes Alvis on bass.



The band jumps; Freddie Guy, Duke, singers Kay Davis, Joya Sherrill, Marie love it.



Ivie Anderson, longtime Ellington vocalist, at the Colgate University concert, one of the band's first.



The full band, at the 400 Club, 1945: Lawrence Brown soloing; saxes Sears, Hodges, Hamilton, Carney (*Toby away*); trombones Nanton, Jones; trumpets Jordan, Hemphill, Anderson, Nance; Rex's stand; Guy behind Duke; Raglin on bass; Greer on drums; vocalists Kay Davis and Marie at Duke's right.



Lena Horne finishes her presentation of an *Esquire* award to Strayhorn with a kiss.



The 1937 Cotton Club dressing room: Duke, Irving Mills, lyric writer Harry Nemo.

Lawrence Brown and Duke trade ideas over the saxes' (Carney, Hardwick, Hamilton, Hodges, Sears) heads.



"How's it going?" Duke cups an attentive ear. Strayhorn corrects mss.



"That's it!" Duke okays the ensemble sound at the record studio.



"Get it? See?" Taft Jordan and Ray Nance aren't certain they do.



The first big band. The RKO lot, 1930. Jenkins, Whetsol, Tizol, Duke and others.





The same band that made *Check and Double Check*, the Cotton Club and jazz history in the late nineteen-twenties. It was almost the end of the tuxedo era.



The 1943 Ellington orchestra assembles for a Pathé short: Raglin on bass; saxes Webster, Jones, Hamilton, Hodges, Carney; Guy; brass men Nance, Jones, Nanton, Williams (Sandy), Tizol, Baker, Jordan; Sonny in back, Duke in front.



Drummer, drinker, raconteur
and best friend—William
"Sonny" Greer.

Joya Sherill records one of
Duke's latest arrangements.

INTRODUCTION

DUKE ELLINGTON WAS BOTH FLATTERED AND FLATTERING when he first heard I was working on this biography. About six months later he had a second thought about it. "Biographies, like statues, are for dead men, aren't they?" he speculated. But this book is no portrait in stone: it is the picture of a man very much alive, whose achievement, already great, is still growing, shaping, perhaps, the future of American music.

To musicians all over the world, Duke's contribution is enormous; it is revered by jazzmen, respected by traditional musicians. His music is adored by millions of fans from Irkutsk to Indianapolis, from Hollywood to The Hague. Unfortunately, in his own country the pressures of prejudice have consistently crushed ultimate commercial achievement: appearances at the top hotels (with one or two exceptions), a fat movie contract, a sponsored radio program. There are those who argue that Duke is successful enough, that any additional traffic with commerce would destroy his musical integrity. But Duke's intense devotion to high standards is not so easily dissipated. The integrity which is at stake is that of the American people, who have been a good deal less than equitable in their recognition of their own colored great. One of the purposes of this book is to call this malfeasance to the attention of my countrymen.

I have tried, here, not only to present the career of Duke Ellington and the collective greatness of the Ellington Orchestra, but to delineate the atmosphere and conditions of the jazz world as well. If I have been at all successful, it is because of the wonderful co-operation I have received from all concerned—from the members of Duke's band and associate organizations, from Duke's family and friends, and from Duke himself,

who, despite his morbid speculations, extended every possible aid and comfort.

Special thanks must go to the oldest members of the band, Toby Hardwick, Sonny Greer, Freddie Guy, Joe Nanton, Harry Carney and Rex Stewart, who freely put their memories and their scrapbooks at my disposal. Thanks are also due to Cootie Williams and Barney Bigard, for helpful and revealing conversations; to Duke's family, Mercer, Edna and George Ellington, Florence Walker, Ruth and Daniel James, who were all extremely generous with time and information; to Billy Strayhorn; to the Pinn family; to Henry Grant; to Leonard Feather; to Barbara Hodgkins; to Willie Manning and Richard Bowdoin Jones and Al Celley and, most particularly, to Mildred Dixon and Jerome Rhea, for invaluable aid.

My wife, Joan, is in large measure responsible for the finished condition of this book. Without her, there would have been no index; without her, there would have been some glaring errors. Her loving contribution falls just short of full collaboration.

BARRY ULANOV

DUKE ELLINGTON

CHAPTER ONE

WASHINGTON WOBBLE

"**B**OV," DUKE ELLINGTON'S PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER said to him sternly one day at high school, "you're never going to amount to anything as long as you live." Ed Henderson was complaining about the way young Ellington spent his time, drumming on table tops, running his hands over imaginary keyboards. When class was called to attention, as often as not, Duke wasn't there. And if he was there, he gave very little of the attention called for. "No, boy, you're never going to amount to a damn thing," Ed Henderson said, shaking his head sadly.

The young Duke felt differently about his future. When he was late in getting up for school, his mother or his Aunt Florence would shake him and push him and rush him out of bed into his clothes. Once dressed, Duke's tempo would change. He would come downstairs slowly, with an elegance. At the foot of the stairs he would stop and call to his mother and his aunt.

"Stand over there," he would direct, pointing to the wall. "Now," he would say, "listen. This," he would say slowly, with very careful articulation, "is the great, the grand, the magnificent Duke Ellington." Then he would bow. Looking up at his smiling mother and aunt, he would say, "Now applaud, applaud." And then he would run off to school.

Duke always felt he would be a success. He counted on it as he counted on the charm of his smile and the ease of his personality even as a very little boy in Washington. Ed Henderson was wrong and Duke knew he was, but he just smiled at the

high school teacher, who, in later years, telling the story to his students, always left Duke's name out of it until the very end. After admitting that he "really had to eat his words," he got great roars of delighted recognition and approval from the boys as he named the student for whom he had predicted such a bad future.

Duke's childhood was a happy one, a full one, one that was bound to induce a sense of confidence and security. It was a life of much ease, provided by his father—who was first a butler and then a Navy blueprintmaker—balanced by a degree of discipline, provided by his mother, and a sprinkling of strife which arose out of the conflicting temperaments of his parents.

Duke's parents were born in the same year, 1879: James Edward Ellington on April 15, in Lincolntown, North Carolina; Daisy Kennedy Ellington on January 4, in Washington, District of Columbia. Uncle Ed, as everybody, even his children, called him at one time or another, was the second youngest of a family of fourteen. Uncle Ed and his brother George, the youngest of the Ellington children, paired off: they both took up buttlng for a profession. But while George accepted tradition and went to work for the oldest, most conservative and best known firm of caterers in Washington, Duke's father, typically, found a very different way to follow his profession. He took a job at fifteen with a very well-known white doctor, M. F. Cuthbert, who lived on a fashionable stretch of Rhode Island Avenue. Within a few years, James Edward was butler, confidant and very close friend. He carried messages between Dr. Cuthbert and his friends and patients and became deeply involved in the confidences of all. Sometimes George spelled him at his job, and sometimes, in exchange, he worked with George or in place of him. They butttled at White House receptions together and at great parties in the Embassies and Ministries throughout Washington. James Edward, however, missed the greatest of all Washington receptions, in 1938, when George went to work at the White House as one of the principal American equerries at the state visit of Their Britannic Majesties,

King George and Queen Elizabeth. He had died just one year earlier.

Duke's father was a perennially happy man who enjoyed all the pleasures life provided him, who relaxed easily and didn't let anything worry him very much. Daisy Kennedy was, in almost every way, his direct opposite, a woman of rigorous moral principle, stiff-lipped and, in direct contradiction of her beautiful face and figure, prim of mien and manner. She frowned upon cosmetics, and only by the application of affectionate family pressure was she persuaded to put on lip-rouge to pose for a photograph shortly after she came to live in New York. Her family wasn't quite so large as her husband's, but with eight brothers and sisters she was used to lots of people in her house. Both she and her husband felt lost without swarms of relatives about them. They had only two children of their own, and those spaced sixteen years apart, so the Ellingtons, J. E. and Daisy K., were always surrounded by sisters and brothers and aunts and uncles and the various progeny thereof. Duke grew up in a house literally filled with dozens of cousins.

Edward Kennedy Ellington was born in his grandfather's house, "old man Kennedy's place," on April 29, 1899, in the twentieth year of both his parents. This was the year of the great blizzard. The snows were so bad that winter that in the last months of Daisy Ellington's pregnancy they were piled up to the second-story windows on 20th Street where her family lived. Shortly after Edward was born, J. E. took his wife and child to live on Ward Place, a very short block just at the beginning of Washington's northwestern section, where the Negroes of the city were gathered in greater numbers than in any other part of the city.

The Ellingtons were colored, in a city which drew as strong and unbreakable a color line as any railroad station, residential section, school, store or place of employment in the states to the south of it. Washington, District of Columbia, the nation's capital, forced its Negroes to live lives of unwanted distinction, physically, intellectually, morally apart from the white inhab-

itants of the hot city by the Potomac. The remarkable thing about families like the Ellingtons is that they were able to grow up so completely like the rest of the country, to think, read, write the same thought patterns, the same verbal formulations; to use the same symbols, foster the same aspirations and bring them to fruition in almost exactly the same way that men and women thought, spoke, fought and achieved in Spokane and Kalamazoo, New York and New Zion, Santa Fe and Santa Barbara. It is remarkable; it is impressive; it is not accidental.

The inheritance of these people is enormous: it goes back to Africa, to cotton fields and Mississippi River levees—the popular symbols of Negro culture. It also goes back to the tightly packed holds of slave ships, which brought the Negroes to America; to the exquisitely designed and decorated plantation houses where they worked after picking cotton; to the ships which plied the Mississippi and brought them from slave quarries in the South to schools and more decent, independent lives in the North. It goes back to twelve million square miles of the continent of Africa, to a feverish fight for existence against every natural obstacle in the jungles. Africa suggests a primitive culture to the average white man. Actually, as our anthropologists have proved clearly, it is a culture of great size and scope and meaning, which produced human beings of the same physical and intellectual and moral dimensions as the backwoods of the Iberian peninsula, as the front cities of the Anglo-Saxon isles and the middle European valleys. It is the culture in which the police force was first made a public institution, in which cattle were used to produce milk and iron was smelted, for the first time. It is a creative culture, in which the brilliant conception of abstract representation was first projected in art, in which perhaps half of our musical instruments were first developed. All of this was Duke Ellington's inheritance, Africa, cottonfields, levees, plantation houses, slave ships, good schooling, everything the Negro had—and a good deal the white man had, as well. For, like most of our colored population, the Ellingtons were a strong racial mixture, black and white and bronze and sepia, brown, yellow and all the other magnificent shades and

tints of human pigmentation. With this variegation of epidermal hue went as rich a mixture of cultures.

From his immediate surroundings, from a long line of forebears who had risen to a firm place in American society, young Edward Kennedy Ellington took his immediate interests, those of any young American boy—baseball, the movies, roving in gangs, street games and parlor socials. He was a good baseball player: hard-hitting enough to earn a place high up in the line-up; smart enough as a fielder to play center field; sufficiently flexible and versatile to play second base, besides. He played this latter position so well that for a while he was called Otto, after a leading second-baseman of the day, Otto Williams. By the time Duke got to his teens, he and his gang were dressing in imitation of the movie stars of that day, leaping fences and jumping across Great Divides in the manner of Douglas Fairbanks and Richard Talmadge, smoking cigars and drinking "fire-water" in the manner of Stuart Holmes, racing cars the way Barney Oldfield did. The street games were like a million other American street games, the roving gangs were like most other bands of small boys clustered together by parochial interests arising out of residence on a common street. But the fights were a little different. The fights were quite often with white boys, and almost as often as they were with white boys they were simply because their opponents were white. It didn't matter who started them: the differences of skin produced differences of opinion; differences of opinion produced chips on shoulders quickly, and the altercations began.

Duke grew up with baseball, motion pictures, fights with whites and pride in his ancestry. He grew up with a happy awareness of the strength of families, the length of their affections and the vigorous loyalties which could and often did arise out of these groups. He grew up with a personality so startlingly ambivalent, as a result of the violently crossed influences of his father and mother, that today there are those who think of him only as a reticent man, completely shy and willfully inarticulate; others who regard him as a shameless extrovert; and still others who fancy him as either a hopeless or a delightful com-

bination of both major traits. But whether introspective or exhibitionist, concerned with baseball, the movies, food and family, like any white American, or probing his Negro antecedents, it is of these psychological and sociological facets that Duke Ellington's music consists. From them it takes shape and size and meaning, and we must never lose sight of them if we are to understand, appreciate and enjoy the man and his superb creations.

When Edward Kennedy was four, Daisy Kennedy sat down to the piano to play *The Rosary*, and he wept. "It was so pretty," he said, "so pretty."

When Edward was seven, Mrs. Klingscale was engaged to teach him piano. Mrs. Klingscale has been called, variously, "Chinkscale," "Klinkscale," any number of reproductions of a tinkling sound combined with the name of the octave base of Western music, in a kind of onomatopoeic justice. Edward was a tolerable piano pupil. He played Czerny's five-finger exercises, the ubiquitous pestilence every beginner at the keyboard from Liszt downward has experienced, since Beethoven's pupil devised them for his pupils. He learned something about the basic scale relationships, the diminutions and augmentations which made keys major or minor, the intervals which formed the fundamental chords, the tonic, subdominant and dominant. He was apprised, in sum, of the mechanics of music, but, much as he got of the mathematics of the relationship of A, B and C, of the flat, sharp and natural shapes of a note, of the fractions, whole, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth, which gave rhythmic value to the measures and phrases, he got correspondingly little of what had made him cry at hearing the maudlin sounds his mother made on the piano when she played *The Rosary*. He played at a church concert given by Mrs. Klingscale and won her compliments and his parents' plaudits, but he himself got so little satisfaction from what he had done that "it all slipped away from me" for six or seven years. Not till he was in high school did music mean much to him again.

For a while, in the later years of grade school and the first of

high, his dissatisfaction with the piano was so great that, like thousands of other youngsters the world over, he did everything possible to get out of practicing. Generally, he could be found at the vacant lot behind the YMCA a few blocks away from the house on 13th Street, between R and S, to which the Ellingtons had moved when he was eight years old. He played baseball and football there, in season. But though an organized game would often find Duke in the line-up, at second base or in the outfield for baseball, at almost any position in football, he wasn't always playing one of America's two most popular sports when he should have been practicing piano. He was more versatile in his interests and more elusive than that, and there were times when the Northwest streets Q to U, 11th to 16th would ring with "Edward, Edward, where are you?" or "Duke!"—the imperative mood for the young nobleman. His whole family, parents, aunts, cousins, were enlisted, at one time or another, in the hunts for Duke. They almost never found him.

Edward K. became "Duke" Ellington at the very early age of eight. The ennobling was effected by Ralph Green, brother of Mrs. Pinn who lived next door to the Ellingtons when they lived, from 1905 to 1916, just across 13th Street, moving from one red brick Victorian house to another, with similar bays on the fronts and points on the roofs and trees and grass around them. Ralph Green was an incorrigible nicknamer, and his sobriquets always stuck. He called one of his brothers-in-law "Joker"; another, who was a Puerto Rican lawyer, he called "Doc" to that gentleman's considerable pleasure and, upon occasion, embarrassment, when he was called upon to minister to the ailing. "Zeb," as he himself was called, named Edward "Duke" for no reason at all, but simply because that was as good a name as any to give the eight-year-old boy next door with the nice smile and easy disposition. But it was not only by the name which he gave Ellington that Zeb Green contributed to Duke's career. Zeb was a gifted musician, though he couldn't read a note of music. He played piano by ear and improvised upon the rubber-band he stretched about a cigar box. He sang very

well in a high tenor voice which elicited tears from his audience when, a few years later, he or they were drunk.

Zeb and Duke's mother were not the only musicians young Ellington heard. J. E., though he, too, didn't know a chord from a piece of string, on paper, was a capable pianist, and a soul-shattering sentimentalist who also made his listeners cry.

Duke went to Armstrong High School, some blocks away from his home, but still in the Northwest neighborhood to which the Washington Negroes had moved when the government moved into the near Northwest, confiscating buildings and erecting new ones. Armstrong was the leading Negro manual training school. Duke went there to study drawing, freehand and mechanical. He was deeply interested in art, interested in little else in the secondary school curriculum, and it was only for those classes that he would show up with regularity. His grades were both sustained and let down by his interests.

It was during the first two years of the little more than three Duke spent at Armstrong—from February, 1914, to June, 1917—that he showed his greatest interest in drawing, in drawing of all kinds. He was a nimble sketch artist, but he wasn't much interested in sketching for its own sake; he wanted to make money with this gift. When he shifted from Boynton Dodson's class in Freehand to R. I. Vaughn's in Mechanical Drawing, he was assigned to do plaques and linen banners and posters announcing various athletic contests and other school functions. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People announced a poster contest. Duke entered and won. That was the kind of thing he wanted to do with his drawing. It was fun to make posters, fun to fool around with color and composition, fun to win prizes. Just before he left high school, he was offered a scholarship to the Pratt Institute of Applied Arts in Brooklyn, perhaps the country's outstanding institution in the field. But by then Duke had found other interests. He turned it down.

One of Duke's new interests was Edna Thompson. Without meaning to, really, she seemed to be following him around.

When his family lived at Ward Place, hers did, too. When his family moved to 13th Street, so did hers. She was in a lot of his classes at Armstrong; sometimes she sat right behind him. They went on school picnics together; it was natural to take Edna. They talked a bit together about music. She practiced far more diligently than Duke did and was far better disciplined in the traditional ways of music. She sat down with Duke and made him really work out the intricacies of scoring music. She made a profound impression upon him.

With Ernest Amos, the music teacher at Armstrong, he had regular classes. But that wasn't enough. When Duke became really interested in the ways of the art of music he went after its complexities intensely. He decided to study with Henry Grant, to take private lessons from the music teacher across the street at Dunbar High School. Grant taught a lot of boys whom he knew well and with whom he'd fooled around playing rags and shouts; he was "O-toe" Hardwick's teacher and Arthur Whetsol's; he led the Dunbar High School orchestra in which the boys played, and it was a good school orchestra.

Henry Grant remembers Duke as a very good student, who grasped the intervallic relationships, both chronological and simultaneous—those of melody and harmony—very easily. He remembers him, too, as a creative musician, even in his first attempts at harmony, in his little exercises. Harmonizing a simple melody was always an experiment in color with Duke; it was always important to him to create a sound that "rang," as he put it, either because it was mellifluous, exquisitely concordant, or because it was bizarre, challengingly discordant. But for all his experimental writing, Duke was anxious to learn the fundamentals, and with the encouragement and the painstaking supervision of this happy little musician, he secured a good base in the theory and harmony of music.

Duke, as his interests changed, began to look further into the technique of playing ragtime piano. He spent lots of time in class running his hands up and down the desk as if he were executing difficult glissandi or flashy arpeggios or just rousing chords. Behind him, three of his musical friends would beat

out time on the tops of their metal stools. They bent low over their stools; Duke concentrated on his desk, shoulders hunched up, as they still are when he plays piano, little crow's-feet of attention stepping around his eyes. Mr. Dodson, the art teacher, looked at the boys. They seemed to be the nucleus of a rag outfit; they were quite audible above the classroom conversation.

"Well, gentlemen, you ought to charge admission," he said. The boys stopped immediately. At other times, gathering that Duke was the natural leader of the quartet, he asked, "Ellington, what's going on?" Duke didn't answer. He side-stepped the issue with a smile and a bow and an "Excuse me."

One day, the teacher, exasperated, pinned him down. "Come now, Ellington," he said, "what's it all about?"

"Mr. Dodson," Duke blurted out, "we have an outfit."

Mr. Dodson could see that the music and the art were pretty well linked together and he didn't worry much from then on, as long as Duke was really doing something with the hunched shoulders and the flashing hands besides beating his desk.

There were some conversations with Mr. Pinn, the short little man next door with the twinkling eyes and the faint look of mischief which he must have picked up from his Scottish ancestors. Duke was always running in and out of his house, and Mr. Pinn didn't see him very often. But every once in a while he would intercept the boy on a run up or down the grilled-iron front stairs.

"What are you doing?" Mr. Pinn asked Duke in 1914.

"Taking up drawing."

"Gonna be a great artist?"

"Mebbe."

"Gonna drop your drawing?" Mr. Pinn asked Duke in 1916.

"Probably not."

"Gonna be a professional pianist?"

"I think so."

Then Duke started to practice two or three hours at a time, usually at night. He would get on a chord "and plunk and plunk and plunk it out," as Mr. Pinn describes it. "He wasn't a

very good pianist then, and two or three hours of plunking out the same chord or a few notes running away from it got to be pretty wearisome." Mr. Pinn hoped he would run into Duke again so he could speak to him about it. One day Duke was running down the front stairs just as Mr. Pinn was leaving his house.

"That's getting to be almost unendurable, Duke," Mr. Pinn said, getting right to the point.

"What, Mr. Pinn?" Duke asked.

"Why, your practicing, Duke."

"Oh," Duke said, "of course." He stopped thoughtfully for a moment on the last step. "I tell you, Mr. Pinn," he explained, "one of these days I'm gonna be famous." And off he ran.

A few days later, Mr. Pinn and Duke met again.

"Mr. Pinn," Duke said, "I'm gonna start a little band. If you know anybody who's gonna want a little orchestra, send them up to see me."

It just so happened that Mr. Pinn ran into some women, a few days after that, who wanted a small colored orchestra for a party. He sent Duke after the job. The women reported back to him on Duke's performance and he in turn told Duke.

"Duke," Mr. Pinn said, "those folks were carried away with your music."

"Really?"

"Yes. Really."

"Well," Duke said, with a sigh of contentment, "that gives me encouragement. I'm gonna go on."

The next time Mr. Pinn saw Duke he was leading a five-piece band. The next time after that, he was in New York. He was going on.

CHAPTER TWO

FLAMING YOUTH

"HERE COMES DUKE!" THEY SHOUTED, WHEN EDWARD ELLINGTON strode down the halls of Armstrong High. It wasn't flashy dress that maintained ducal status for him; his mother never would have permitted that. It was, rather, the extraordinary neatness with which his shirt and tie, trousers and jacket and hat and coat fell into place. The crease in his pants was always firm; the knot of his tie always well-shaped and right up to his collar; his shirt clean and well-matched for color and texture with suit material and tie stuff. His shoes were shined. He gleamed. And his posture was erect, his shoulders thrown back. His legs strode ahead almost as if they led a proud independent existence, a regal gait he has never lost, though since his thirties his weight has been almost twice that of his adolescent years, hovering around the 200 mark. His large bronze head commanded attention; his voice was strong, imperious. At sixteen, he was Duke Ellington by natural entailment.

Otto Hardwick, several years younger than Duke, smaller, gayer maybe, a close friend because of their close musical interests, lived a block away from him, on T Street. Jerry Rhea was a neighbor. They were school friends, friends on the street, but never really deeply attached until they began to play and sing music together. But it was Otto's older brother, John, who got most of Duke's time, who lingered over ice cream sodas with him, gobbling great heaps of the stuff in the lazy Washington weather. They fell naturally into the hazy, happy lethargy of the city's spring, summer and autumn, as the sun oozed heat through the low overhanging trees of old streets circling away

from government buildings. The informal stoops on the red brick and brownstone T Street houses sheltered impromptu parties of youngsters under the austere shadows of Washington's pseudo-classic monuments. The atmosphere was softly, insinuatingly urban; the architecture, mixed ante-bellum South and pre-Christian Greece, imposed a certain dignity upon these colored youngsters which no other group of jazzmen—those from New Orleans, Chicago, Kansas City or New York, to name the principal sources of jazz talent—ever possessed. Duke had it, of course; so had Otto Hardwick, the Miller brothers, Bill Escoffery, Claude Hopkins, Arthur Whetsol, Elmer Snowden, Rex Stewart, all the musicians who were born or bred in the capital; they had it, they have it. There was a Washington pattern: it involved a certain bearing, a respect for education, for the broad principles of the art of music; a desire for order, for design in their professional lives. These things, this pattern, gave to Ellington and his associates, from the very beginning, a line of development, a sense of growth toward a larger and more meaningful expression, that, as much as anything, made the top level of jazz inevitable for them.

Duke was almost always on top. The kids, the Hardwicks, Millers, their boy and girl friends, used to give house parties. They never meant much unless Duke played piano at them. That was partly because Edward Ellington, springing heavily into his teens, was aware once more of the emotional power of music and of some of the means to communicate it. It was just as largely due to the force of his personality. Then, as now, the girls flocked around him, shared his piano stool with him, hovered over his showy hands, angled for his broad smile and his humor-puckered forehead.

They were well-off at these house parties. Soft drinks and ice cream were the fare. Duke's raggy piano was the entertainment. Music and confections kept the kids happy for hours and hours and hours, and even as severe a parent as Otto's father, self-appointed guardian of the morals of all the youngsters in his district, was brought around to smiling approval of the parlor socials. But Jerry Rhea's father could never quite stand to hear

Duke play rag-tail and bobble-scale down the pianos in their houses.

"Get that noise out of here!" Mr. Rhea screamed down at Duke and Jerry.

"They aren't doing anybody any harm," Mrs. Rhea answered for the kids. But the voice of masculine authority was stronger than hers and out it went.

Perhaps Ellington's ragtime was tiresome listening for the generation just before his. The only musical roughness they had experienced had been in the lyrics to such songs as *I Love My Wife, But, Oh, You Kid!* and *Everybody's Doin' It Now*. The polyrhythms of ragtime piano must have sounded strange in 1914 and '15. The strong accents on the usual weak beats, the weak ones where they had been strong, were jarring syncopation for older ears in the younger years of this century. The incessant repetition of the walking bass, going up and down the chords in the same pattern, over and over and over again in the left hand; the percussive sound of the piano, as the hands jumped back and forth in the style that is still a part of jazz, called "stride"—these things jangled the nerves and set heads aching when the nerves and heads were used to the peaceful rhythms and soporific sounds of Victor Herbert and Ethelbert Nevin. It is not without cause that so many of the representative rags were called "shouts."

Duke was really taken with ragtime. "Those ragtime pianists sounded so good to me! And they looked so good! Particularly when they flashed their left hands. I noticed that the left hand was the trick of it and that audiences were most impressed by a showy left hand. So I developed a showy left hand. I had little but a vague remembrance of those piano lessons in my mind, but I could see that the rag pianists employed more affected fingering than the concert pianists and that attracted me very much. I hit that fingering very hard and somehow it seemed to come natural to me."

Duke says he "wasn't very smart," and for all the hard-hitting, "I could never catch on to what anyone else played, so I developed my own stuff." He went to rent parties, where the cost of

admission and the price of drinks went to pay the house rent of the hosts, and at these parties he heard the premier rag pianists of the Washington day, Clarence Bowser, Lester Dishman, Louis Brown, Doc Perry, Louis Thomas. Through the shouts of encouragement from the party-goers, the boom of the piano crashed. Bowser was "majestic," in Duke's estimation. His lush style sparkled prettily. Dishman was "fast as they came, with a humming left hand, and beautiful melodic weaving against it in his right." The parties justified the name of "house hops"; the houses hopped. The music justified the name of "shout": it roared. And, piecemeal, Duke managed to catch on, a run here, a chord there, a hum from Dishman, a touch of Bowser's majesty, and a great scoop of James P. Johnson's technique.

James P. was the great rag pianist of the day. His piano roll of his own *Carolina Shout* was must listening. Duke slipped the Swiss-cheese-like paper on his piano's roller, slowed its speed down and followed every hill and dale its playing made upon the instrument's keyboard, pressing his fingers down after J. P.'s, pedaling after Johnson, until he had learned to shout *Carolina*. When James P. Johnson came to Washington to supplant the piano roll with his person, Duke was ready. Johnson sat his barrelly figure down at the piano, flashed his infectious grin, tossed back his bullfrog face, and, with eyes shining, hopped, stomped and strutted through the strident figures of his celebrated composition. It was at a big gathering, and the large crowd yelled and clapped its approval. Duke followed, addressed the piano in more sedate fashion, as was fitting in the younger man, the comparative unknown. But he was the local boy and sentiment was with him, his gang was behind him. He rolled over a few bars. He strode into it, and with hands leaping from the piano in the impressive manner he had learned from watching Dishman, Bowser and friends, "he ran him right out of the joint," as one of the witnesses recalls the event.

From running the great J. P. right out of the joint, it was an easy step to the confidence necessary to compose his own rag. Working after school at the Poodle Dog Café, a high ranking

soda fountain "establishment," right around the corner from the Washington Senators' ballground, it was logical to call it the *Soda Fountain Rag*. Now all that was necessary was the opportunity to play it.

One day the heavy-drinking pianist at one of the cafés, a "whiz" of a pianist but even more brilliant a drinker, drank so much he knocked himself right out. Duke sprang to his place, and without a moment's hesitation to clear away the prostrate form of the overcome piano-shouter, he jumped into the opening bars of *Soda Fountain Rag*. He played it as a one-step, two-step, waltz, and as a fox-trot, slow, middle-tempo and up. "They never knew it was the same piece," and "I was established. Not only did I write my own music, but I had a repertory!" Duke became more interested in this repertory, in his piano altogether, than he was in his painting, and in 1917 he left high school just a few months before graduation.

Duke began to get a reputation. His several versions of the *Soda Fountain Rag* pleased waltz, one-step, two-step, fox-trot and tango lovers. Washington was almost the gayest of American cities, in the years from 1916 to 1919, when Duke was coming up. And his piano, even at its raggiest, noisiest, most rhythmically confusing, was a welcome condiment to jaded diners looking for new seasoning.

The embassies of the embattled European countries were seriously interlocked in competition for party honors, and after our entrance into the war removed several of the belligerents from the Washington scene, the gatherings organized by the American ministries and ministers more than made up for their departure. The gaiety was contagious. It spread from diplomatic circles to lower castes of Washington society. It reached out to such centers of organized fun as the True Reformers Hall, plunk in the middle of Northwest Washington. The true reformers had long ago left the squat, meandering building, which housed one great hall and many small meeting rooms. In one of these, Room 10, Duke Ellington and various groups of musicians used to rag and shout and make tentative stabs at melancholic musing in the blues form on more Saturdays than

any of them can now remember. In Room 5, at the True Reformers, Duke played his first professional job, from 8:00 P.M. to 1:00 A.M., for seventy-five cents!

Room 10 it was where Duke's Washingtonians took shape in '17, '18 and '19. Otto Hardwick was playing bass fiddle then; William Escoffery was on guitar; the Millers, Bill, Brother and Felix, who were "sophisticates—they drank corn and gin, but heavily," filled out the band, with Lloyd Stewart on drums. Otto was too small to carry his bass, so his father would lug it for him, taking advantage of the opportunity to check up on "his boys." Arthur Whetsol, who was a pre-medical student at Howard University, sometimes blew cornet for Duke. The band began to take some sort of rough shape, with a regular rhythm section, Elmer Snowden coming in on banjo, with a large number of good hornmen who would come in, one or all, for the Saturday nights in Room 10. Duke persuaded O-toe, as they called Hardwick, to switch to a C melody saxophone, and the melody line got a break.

Duke began to branch out. He tried his flashy hand (his left, of course) at one of the five pianos in Russell Wooding's enormous band, one of Washington's most successful colored commercial orchestras. Sitting down at the instrument assigned him for the first performance with Wooding, Duke, characteristically, began to dream; he saw "some spots for nice things," to indulge his musical fancies and his dream-world fantasies, in the score in front of him; he indulged; Wooding, less indulgent, sent him on his way.

One of his first jobs, in 1916, had been with Louis Thomas, the "eminent" ragtime pianist and leader of "gig" bands, the one-nighter outfits. Thomas told Duke if he could learn to play *The Siren Song*, he could play piano in his third band, a watered-down, watered-down version of the society crew which brought Louis his biggest money. Duke spent a day learning *The Siren Song*, and got the job. When he arrived to play it, he learned, to his consternation, that the job was a "legitimate" one, that they weren't going to play any "jumps." "The musicians started talking to me about correct chords, and I knew

that in a few minutes I'd be sunk. Then somebody requested *The Siren Song*, and in great relief I started plunking out the number." He threw in the flashy handwork he'd picked up from Washington's rag pianists and from Lucky Roberts, the man for the trick of throwing his hands away from the piano, who used to come down from New York to play the Howard Theatre, Washington's number one Negro theater. The familiar figures of *The Siren Song* and the hands jumping impressively from the keys elicited screams of delight from the kids around the stand. Duke knew how to do it.

Duke played with Thomas, with Daniel Doy, another leader of pick-up bands for one-night jobs, in fact with almost all the "gig" bands. His experience grew. Doc Perry—one of the chief leaders of these small jump outfits who played one night in one café, one night in another, Saturdays at lodge halls and Sundays and Fridays, maybe, at house hops—insisted that Duke study hard, refresh his technique and become as alert as the legit musicians. With this experience, the Room 10 sessions and the long nights spent at home working out original compositions, crude, brief, but original, Duke felt it was time to make his band permanent. He had noticed that Thomas, Perry, Meyer Davis all took big ads in the telephone book, advertising their musical catering services. He took one just as big, figuring that if his name were set in type as large as the others most people would consider him equally important and throw lots of work his way. He was right. They did, after a while.

Hardwick and Whetsol, the Millers and Snowden and Escoffery, Jerry Rhea, who sometimes sang with the band, wondered why they got such choice jobs, picking up some of the Embassy work, playing almost exclusively for white folks. It was months before they saw Duke's ad in the phone book and understood.

It's true that Duke and his colleagues got good jobs, but the jobs didn't come overnight, and they continued, for several years, to be mixed with the literally tough ones, roughhouse ones, nasty ones. Those were the evenings which started out as balls and ended as brawls. "We'll give you the five dollars [sometimes it was seven dollars] later," the guy who hired them

told Duke. "Fine," Duke said. But somehow, a few minutes before the dance was to end, somebody insulted somebody else and nobody got paid.

Duke was making enough money in the late teens to move his folks a block and a half away from 13th, between R and S, to a new house of their own at 1212 T Street, between 12th and 13th. It was a good house, a larger house, for sister Ruth Dorothea Ellington, who was born in 1915, sixteen years after Duke, to grow up in.

Duke was making enough money even to think about marriage. He thought about it and decided for it and asked the logical girl to be his wife. Edna Thompson, who had skirted his grade and high school days, whose family had moved with his in the short Negro migration from near to farther Northwest Washington, who had taught him a little about music and shared party gaiety and block social life, was his girl. They were married in July, 1918. They produced a child, Mercer Kennedy Ellington, the following year. Another child, born shortly after Mercer, died in infancy.

Edna not only encouraged and stimulated some music. She was right behind his drawing and painting, too. She remembered a masterpiece of pen-and-ink drawing he'd done at high school, an unusually sensitive sketch of that stereotype of high school drawing classes, the head of a Greek god. She remembered the signs at high school and the work he'd started doing for dances and theaters around Washington. They were better than average posters announcing dances, describing new movies and stage shows, and, like his music to come, fitting content with form very well. There was Edna's verbal encouragement and her attractiveness as a subject. Duke painted signs for money and sketched her for kicks. He sketched her playing with Mercer and feeding him, the fair, lissome mother and the blissful, slightly browner son in adored and adoring juxtaposition.

"I was awful shy," Edna says of these drawings, "and so I could hardly look at them and appraise them; they were of me, after all. But Duke said they were art, and so I guess they were."

She concludes ruefully that she "would sure like to be able to judge for myself now. But they've all disappeared."

Duke was faced continually, in those years, with a difficult problem. Should he go on with his art? Should he go on with his music? Which would make more money to take care of his wife and son and contribute to the running expenses of his parents' house and his own, a few blocks away, on T Street? Like the man who picks up everybody's overcoats and the bat-boy who gathers the whole baseball team's bats in his arms, Duke compromised by doing everything at once.

By 1919, the phone book-stimulated business was steady, the income was high, around \$150 or \$200 a week for Duke himself, with five bands working for him and no end in sight to the lucrative flow. At the parties they played they were meeting "nice white folks," for the first time forgetting differences of skin in similarities of musical interest and temperament. Duke was beyond the *faux pas* stage, or embarrassing moments of the kind he'd had with Doc Perry once, at the British Embassy. "I showed up in a sharp shepherd's plaid suit at a formal. Doc never forgave me."

And the sign-painting business was thriving, too. In combination with a friend, Ewell Conway, Edward Ellington had formed a partnership signified by the combination of their last names. Sign-painting by day, piano-playing by night, Duke was a successful businessman, happy that he had decided against the Pratt Scholarship.

There were great friendships. Differences of age faded away in the camaraderie of music. Duke, Otto, Whetsol, Jerry, Otto's brother, the Millers, and so on, were of different ages, somewhat different in background, a whole range of temperaments among them, but doggedly, fanatically, furiously devoted to their music. Sometimes they played together, sometimes under other gig leaders. But after every job, every night, they'd meet at the late places and talk about the night's work, about the changes they'd worked out on some familiar tune, about tomorrow and tomorrow and three years ago last Wednesday when they were playing more baseball than music.

"That band at the Howard is a whiz," O-toe would say.

"Sure is," Bill Miller would agree.

"Don't say?" Duke would query.

"Yeah," Otto would continue. "Puerto Ricans—Marie Lucas' outfit—great trombonist name of Tizol."

"Uh-huh." Duke would nod, as he crammed the last spoonful of one of the Miller brothers' ice cream sundaes into his mouth. He'd already finished his own.

"Hey," one of them would call out, "look."

"Yeah?" Duke or Otto or Bill or Felix or Snowden would ask. But the uplifted affirmation was rhetorical. They knew what came next.

"Don't they look awfully tired?" the same one would continue, nodding in the direction of the bandstand.

"Sure thing," was the consensus of opinion, and Otto, Duke, et al., would rush to the stand, to relieve the "tired" musicians, having themselves only just come from a night's hard playing.

They loved to play. The Poodle Dog, the Dreamland, the Industrial Café received nightly musical bouquets from them in testament to that love. "A jam session was a jam session then," Duke says today, and so do Otto and Sonny Greer and Rex and any of the musicians in the Ellington organization who go back that far. "We didn't play for money," they continue, "we played for kicks. And they were kicks. You came into a place, say the Dreamland. You noticed a guy on the stand who played your kinda horn. You walked up to him or the leader and you put him on. Oh, either he was tired or what did he think he was anyway, the only C melody in the world, or the only pianist or drummer or cornet, huh? And you finally got to take his place. And you played everything you knew and a hell of a lot you didn't know you knew. And it was murder, for him or for you, but it was kicks, too, and a musical education. That was a jam session." You will very rarely see Ellington musicians in such jam sessions now; without originality but with enough feeling and experience to back up the epithet, they call today's jam sessions "prostitution."

"People talk to me about improvisation," Duke elaborates,

"and how jam sessions are the thing, but after all, there is so little that's really improvised at a jam session. Most of the guys play things they're used to playing over and over again. Tunes suggest certain phrases and those phrases suggest other phrases, a chord suggests an obvious modulation into another key, and you get less that is actually fresh and new and vital at those sessions than you do when we work out an arrangement and leave time and space for a man to stretch himself in his solos."

"Then someone sent for Sonny Greer from New York," says Duke, talking of the old days.

"That's all," Otto Hardwick says.

"The sensational Sonny Greer, I called myself," Sonny intones, "and I was."

"And he was," everybody agrees.

"Little Willie from Long Branch," Jerry Rhea sneers affectionately.

Sonny scowls, but little Willie he was. William Greer was a man of almost medium height, fast on the verbal draw, even faster, amazingly enough, on the drumsticks, in 1919. He was the light tan boy with the personality, from Long Branch, New Jersey. Smart in school in everything but German, he picked up drums to ingratiate himself with the teacher of that language because she doubled as supervisor of the school band. Oh, Sonny was a fast man, a fast boy, a fast drummer.

Long Branch was less than 200 miles up the Atlantic Coast from Washington, but what a difference! Sonny Greer had never played with anything but a white band until he came to the capital city. Up and down the New Jersey coast, with Wilbur Gardner at the Green Gables, four years for Mabel Ross at the famous Ross-Fenton farms following Vincent Lopez's seven-piece band in those formative years for dance music and jazz. He knew Diamond Jim Brady, and talked with as much sparkle as Brady's gems radiated, of those stones, "big as a fist," of that appetite, "big as the man."

"We watched Sonny work in the pit," Duke recalls, "and he

used a lot of tricks. He was flashy, and we were impressed by flash, but our minds still weren't made up. We decided to give him the works, and find out just what sort of a guy he was."

Duke stands on the street corner. He figures he's the natural lead for a conversation with Sonny, for he's a killer in his new shepherd's plaid suit (that was the pattern, those days!) bought on time.

"I'll bet you only passed through New York," Duke says.

"Passed through, all right," Sonny comes back, "stopped off to see Diamond Jim and Lillian Russell, paid my respects to the Hoffman House and the Waldorf, spent a weekend in Central Park. . . ." And he names every place of interest, and many of none, in the big city. He's in.

"We decide you're okay," Duke says. The others nod. Sonny grins.

Willie Greer worked through a few weeks in the Howard Theatre pit band and then quit to join Ellington. He was a decided asset at jam sessions after business hours, a great teller of tales who could always top the last whopper with a ten-minute stopper about a fabulous musician or a girl of prodigious feats or a man who could drink his own weight in corn. When Elmer Snowden's eight-piece combination played one night at the Dreamland, opposite Duke's crew, that night just three men, it was the tricks, flying frantically between drumsticks and piano fingers, worked out by Greer and Ellington, which won them the coveted honors of the evening.

There would be another session. It wouldn't matter much who was playing with whom, as long as Sonny was with Duke. Either one of them could out-talk any other musician; together they could "raise hell with Congress," as a confrere put it.

"You're gonna get cut," Duke would yell to the other musicians.

"Not a chance," Sonny would confirm him.

"It's this way," Duke would offer, "you see, we've got a mess of new stuff from New York that just can't be beat."

"And a trombonist who plays all the trumpet notes," Sonny would add.

"Every number an original"—from Duke.

"Nothing you ever heard before, so how you gonna beat it?"—from Sonny.

"Give up now, 'tain't worth trying"—together.

Nervously, their musical opponents would mount the stand, but they were defeated before they began.

With the advent of the 1920's, Duke, O-toe, the Millers, and their friends and business associates, passed from ice cream to "fire-water" in earnest. With Sonny's presence for morale, the boys were "topnotch juicelhounds," Duke says. They strutted after the walks of their favorite movie stars, choked a little over the stronger drinks, the first experimentations of a nation waltzing weakly and questioningly into Prohibition. They raced their cars.

The youngest of the Hardwicks was a car fan, as mad for the fire-eating automobiles as he later was for photography, the language the French speak and the game of Blackjack. O-toe had made some brief forays into the \$90 suit class, but he found cars an even better way of wasting money. So he bought one, a Pullman, probably the most independent, least reliable, most cantankerous Pullman of a long line of independent, unreliable and evilly disposed Pullmans. It didn't have a crank handle and you had to push it to get it started. It always stalled on a hill, sometimes just a few feet upgrade. They called it the Dupadilly. One day it stalled "in the middle of nowhere" and they just left it.

After the Dupadilly the Hardwicks bought another car from the used-car man, who was known by the unexplained and apparently inexplicable name of "Dear-Me." "Dear-Me" sold O-toe "a honey of a car," and Hardwick's "honey" and Duke's Chandler, a recent acquisition, and Claude Hopkins' car used to get mixed up in heats that were anything but dead on Washington's hot streets in the summers of '19, '20 and '21. Claude, a neighbor, was making some headway as a bandleader and pianist, too, with occasional jobs in New York and offers from Europe and Australia. They had much to talk about and drink about as well as to race about.

Then, one eventful day in 1922, came a wire from bandleader Wilbur Sweatman. He wanted Sonny in New York. Sonny wanted Otto and Duke, and that meant New York for Greer, Ellington and Hardwick. Dissolve Washington into a panorama shot of New York. Skyscrapers gleaming in the twilight sun. Cars "rushing madly" through the canyons of Wall Street, Broadway and Fifth Avenue. People drinking, eating, living madly. Where "everybody" was rich and stayed high all the time and Duke Ellington, Sonny Greer, Otto Hardwick, Arthur Whetsol and Elmer Snowden had to split a hot dog five ways to stay alive.

CHAPTER THREE

DROP ME OFF IN HARLEM

THERE WERE TWO KINDS OF BANDS, IN 1922. ONE WAS THE production outfit, lots of saxes, pianos, banjos, and as many brass as the leader could get to play together—twenty, thirty, forty men. The other was the small unit, five, six men, piano, banjo, tuba, drums, cornet and C melody sax, or clarinet; it played jazz. The Original Dixieland Jass Band, which no longer sounded quite so original in 1922, was one of the latter; so were the New Orleans Rhythm Kings and the best little band of them all, then, King Oliver's Sunset Café gang in Chicago, with Louis Armstrong on second trumpet. In New York, Harlem was shifting noisily, happily, with rather bleary eyes, from a center of faded white respectability into the city's Negro quarter. The shift was made to the tune of James P. Johnson's piano and Willie Smith's, to Count Basie and Fats Waller striding lushly along their keyboards. Joe Nanton's barrelhouse trombone at the Bucket of Blood blew brazen notes through the uptown mist, and Bubber Miley and Sidney Bechet were playing their style-setting horns (trumpet and clarinet) with Mamie Smith at the Garden of Joy, atop a rock at 140th and Seventh. Glasses clinked and liquor gurgled at the Green Cat and Connor's, where Bubber sometimes played and toppers wandered unevenly up the steps from Mexico's. Rhythmic inebriation was the order of the day, jazz was on its way in. And Duke, Sonny and O-toe went to work for Wilbur Sweatman, whose band was emphatically of the first type mentioned, large and unrhymic, where

the day's order was order itself and happiness was a thing called after-work drunks.

The Washingtonians did not last very long with Sweatman. A few theater dates, the Lafayette, then Harlem's biggest and most important house, at 135th and Seventh, and a Staten Island spot, which was, as Sonny put it, "a weekend of grief." But the real "grievin'" was still to come. With the end of their brief career with Wilbur, the gentlemen from T Street and Long Branch were stranded. Wilbur was still performing every night with his three clarinets, but the Washington boys were on a catch-as-catch-can diet, and they didn't catch very much. At night it didn't matter a great deal whether or not you had any money, you made the rounds. If you had your instrument with you, or could play piano, you were admitted, and everybody bought you drinks.

The Capitol, at 140th and Lenox, featured a pianist called Willie the Lion. His surname was Smith, but they called him the Lion because, during the war, then recently ended, he had volunteered to go up to the front to fire a French 75. Others volunteered, too, but few stayed with it so long: for 33 days and nights Willie fired the cannon at the Germans and when it was over he was famous as the Lion. Famous during the war for his bravery, afterward for his piano playing, the Lion played a delicate style, with lots of pretty little runs, or a ram-bunctious one, but whichever it was, the tempo was almost always the same. "Belly-laugh tempo," Duke calls it.

When you came into the Capitol you either were in step with the Lion, literally, or you had to stop and get into it. It was a middle tempo, just like a belly laugh, hah-hah-hah-hah, hah-hah-hah-hah. "The world's greatest atmosphere," Duke recalls. "The Lion would growl at you, 'Well, all right, take it from there,' and with the aid of some crude red liquor, you would." Willie's florid style made an enormous impression on Duke, and to this day they still play alike. Duke never copied the Lion's physical approach to the piano, cigar clenched hard between his teeth, back sharply angled against the chair-back, stomach rising stubbornly between him and the piano, knees,

often as not, crossed; but he did imitate his fluttering arpeggios, his charming chordal commentaries.

The Lion would play at the Capitol for a living and at a lot of other places for kicks. Then, maybe, Duke would sit down at the piano, or Fats Waller would. Fats was following his mentor, James P. Johnson, around town. The Lion said of Fats, "Yeah, a yearling; he's coming along, I guess he'll do all right." Piano duels were as much the thing in New York as they had been in Washington.

Rent parties were big, too. And the big man, James P., got to play them. But he couldn't play them all, so he turned a lot of his business over to Lippy, a professional character "who had heard so much piano he couldn't play any more. He only thought piano." Lippy gave work to a lot of piano-players. In the course of spreading it around, Duke got a small share, and even Sonny, who had lots of New York contacts, picked up some piano work. (There has never been a man in the Ellington band who couldn't play some piano.)

Lippy knew where every piano, pianist and player-piano in town was located. He and James P., Fats, the Lion and Duke ("I was one of the main hangers-on") would cruise together. Lippy would walk up to any house at any hour of night. He'd ring the doorbell. Somebody would wake up after a half-hour's inescapable ringing and shout out the window, "Who the hell is making all that noise?" "It's me," said Lippy, "and James P. is here with me." It was magic, open sesame. They were in and the evening was on. Those evenings lasted through many mornings. The Washingtonians' introduction to New York showed them a glamorous city which came most thoroughly alive at night, one that produced an unending supply of golden sound, if not the metal itself in any considerable quantity.

The sound and the taste, of music and liquor, were enough to keep Duke, Sonny and O-toe in kicks and without kicks for some weeks, but there came a time when shoes losing soles tried these men's souls, when the lack of steady work crippled their ambition, when they looked as down-at-the-mouth as their foot-gear was down-at-the-heel. They were ready to quit.

One day Duke was kicking his heels disconsolately along the Lenox Avenue sidewalk, his regal stride suspended temporarily for a subdued pace, his eyes on the ground instead of attached imperiously to the horizon ahead of him. "Flopl!" He stopped. A flashing white envelope twinkled ahead of him in the Harlem sun. Something about it. He stooped down laboriously to pick it up. Who knows? He opened it. Fifteen dollars!

Duke bought himself a new pair of shoes and three coach tickets back to Washington. Sonny, whose fortunes were now firmly linked with Duke's and Otto's, entrained with them to their native city, to regular meals again, real home cooking, money in the pocket and a generally easier if less romantic life.

Duke was occupied, when he got home, with his wife, Edna, and his son, Mercer, who was now four years old and being looked after by his grandmother; with the remnants of his sign-painting business, and with the possibilities of his old band-booking business in Washington. Otto, reunited with his family, was just having fun, blowing a little horn and eating, drinking, balling with his old friends. Sonny was being absorbed into the Ellington family household.

"I've got some rare whisky for you, ole man," Duke's father told Sonny.

"No kidding?"

"Look at that dusty decanter," said Uncle Ed, as Sonny, like almost everybody else, called him.

"Sure is dusty."

"Been around, this stuff has."

"So I see."

"Drink up."

Sonny took a long quaff and exclaimed at the richness of the old whisky.

"Food for the head," he said. "Lo-o-vely!"

Next week, Uncle Ed greeted Sonny again.

"Found another rare bottle." He talked it up big, trotted out another fine-looking piece of cut glass, sometimes covered with mold or dust, sometimes polished to a shining surface, with the amber or nutmeg-brown contents shining through the pris-

metic glass, carrying silvery patterns across Danny's mouth as his eye caught the glass.

"Don't see?"

"The inside."

"Food for the head, food for the body, nourishes the nerves," Danny said.

"Quite right," J. E. Ellington agreed and offered him the bottle.

Danny never discovered that old Uncle Ed, delighted with the drummer's unerring taste for liquor, was giving him a wide sampling of the Ellington collection of wine and whiskey too. The best you ever tasted, brought over. Oh, there was some variety of vintage. Some of it was a very youngish-old one, some of it all of one, some of it just distilled, but always corn. And Danny, coming from the North, hadn't ever tasted corn.

Another distinguished drinker was Thomas Waller, just a kid then, but very much at home across the makings of a bar or the roxy of a game. He passed through town, playing in a baroque show that spring of 1923, and stopped off at all the places to handle a little piano and flip a few credits. He and Duke got on playing and talking, and before many chords and dances had passed, Pat was invited up to the Ellington house in brick-chicken legs and wings with the family. Over the two-dump-pouring loads which Aunt Dorey tried to make a delectable brewer, Pat told Duke about the realities of his band. The money wasn't bad, but it was no damn living.

"Hey, Duke," he said, "we're all gonna quit. Why're you stuck in New York and push one piano? What? As always, he rolled his eyes and tapped his head back for interrogative emphasis.

"Not a bad idea," Duke assented, but with big-city-bird conviction, with the tone of a man who has once been burned but hasn't lost his appetite for fire, he said, "You, you Pat, but I'm not taking any chances. When are when you get to New York if there are openings for me? 'O' Ours 'o' Danny, and maybe Snowden and Whizard, and then when we know we've got the job, we'll come right up."

"Good enough," Thomas Waller agreed, and smiled as with a bone.

Some weeks later a wire arrived: "TATE STAYING. OTHER JOBS OPEN."

Danny, Otto, Whizard and Snowden went up ahead. A few weeks of silence and they came a wire: "EVERYTHING FIXED. JOB GING FOR YOU." Duke followed.

That was there had been wires, no chance for anything to go wrong, so Duke left some money with Aunt Dorey (in his mother was there called), took a good pocketful himself and came up to city. He listed a drawing room, ate his way through a couple of the Pennsylvania Railroad's more expensive meals and arrived at Penn Station in New York with little more than a dollar.

But Ellington's traveling in style. He leaves a cab and goes upstairs on his last five pennies.

He comes at 1234th and Leman, 1234th, 1234th, 1234th. There they stand, in front of the Copland. All four of them, Danny, Hardwick, Aunt Snowden.

"Well, what ya know?" Otto asks.

"How's things?" Danny wants to know.

"Good to see you," the more restrained Whizard acknowledges.

Greetings exchanged, but before there is time for news, the last chance: "How on some gold?"

"Gold?" Duke repeats, his voice rising in the way of teenage boys which has never left him.

The story comes out. Where or no, there isn't any job yet. Promises, yes. Jobs, no. It'll come soon. But meanwhile they've got to live.

Slipping before again, but only half heartedly, because the barbyren structure was in the college. It never materialized, however.

Fortunately, the Washingtonians stuck together, and when Ada Smith whose crop of red hair had already won her the name of Redding, met the boys and learned of their real situation, she got to work. Duke had worked with her, accompanying

her singing, at the Orpheum at Washington. The others had either played for her or parted with her.

"Work you need, work is for you, and work you shall have," she said.

She went right up to Warren Williams and told him what was what, who these kids were and what was to be done for them. Warren Williams was an important man in Harlem, a politician, a boss. "Warren's," one of the brightest spots in Harlem, was the successor to a similar club downtown which Williams had run. In the changing course of night-life fortunes, which made one place the favorite one month, another the next, and spared few clubs and owners from a frantic existence swinging between the edge of bankruptcy and a million-dollar success, Warren's remained the upstart place. It was Harlem headquarters for Bert Williams, the great colored comic; for Jack Johnson, the Negro heavyweight champion of the world; for Frank Fay and his Oscar success; for Al Jolson and up-and-coming chorus girls like Louella La Beare (Joan Crawford). That was the spot. Lindbergh decided, for Duke and the Washingtonians. She was persuasive enough to convince Williams, and he let his regular band go and hired Ellington, Hartwick, Wilbur, Greer and Whorrel.

People who had come to 134th Street and Seventh Avenue just to feel some of the atmosphere, to read political letters or just to get drunk, began to listen to the music. There were lots of small combinations in Harlem, but none quite like this one. The little basement-cave with the dampened double took on an added atmosphere from the side music at the Washingtonians. Duke Sweden stood as leader and business representative, but Duke set the music. He organized rehearsal sessions at which both "band" and vocal arrangements were set, almost everything was planned. The music was planned, planned to serve as background for her bubble and tick talk—"convince, convince, convince." It was also designed to move big, fill feet and put just a slight edge, a kind of cerebral aphrodisiac, on the dance and songs.

The jazz which had come to New York in 1913, via New

Orleans, Chicago and points in between, was a crude one, first sent to them for the most part, blues, blues inspired and rough little bands leading them up. The Original Dixieland Jazz Band (the double s had become a double e) had caused a little excitement with its driving but deliberately conventional at Harpers' Restaurant downtown. Fletcher Henderson had just moved into the Club Alabam' for the beginning of his expected New York stay, but his band was still working special. The biggest kids in town were still being provided by the parents, James F. Johnson, Tom Walker, Willie the Lion, Wilbur Ross, and others, just emerging from the raggedy show stage, their keyboard formalities were the dulcet harmonies only and the less concerned melodically, mostly Duke's band, though only five pieces, was something of a revolutionary change, both for Harlem, the district, and New York, the big city. The great innovations at good were still to come, but Duke moved soft volume and organized settings with traditional goodheart music, never losing the reality of true jazz, never without the sense of color, of texture, which distinguished his writing and playing and looking above all other competitors and bandmen in the medium.

After a few months in Brown's, Ellington, Warlock, Snowden, Greer and Whorrel were household names, at least from 134th to 136th streets among musicians. There was a momentary sensation in the land when they chartered the Blues, business representative, and then musical leader, had paid himself a little more than they were getting, an recognition of his extra services. They decided to disagree with all his services, regular and extra. That's when Freddie Guy came in.

Freddie was Virginian-born but New York-bred. He came to New York in his mother's arms and was a thorough New Yorker by the time he met Duke, Greer, Sunny, and Arnie Whorrel. His musical background was much like theirs, gaging around the city, working with John Seiditz bands, which varied from ten to fifty pieces, with three or four night's work guaranteed him every week. He'd been taught a little music at elementary school, the dramatic version of the dramatic arts, and a few

comes for the pleasure sounds the instruments of the orchestra made. The rest he picked up himself. In early 1929, he was the banjo player in his own band at Earl Barker's Oriental Café, which was upstairs next door to a padroom run for from Barker's. Fats played piano in the band. Angelina Rivers sang and played fiddle with them. It was a good noisy spot, but Earl Barker was shooting for higher stakes. He moved an "Ironing Guy" in possession of the premises. Fiddle was in demand, his steady playing was a rhythmic backbone to those small combinations; his reliable character was an emotional loan. Barker Williams told the leader of the orchestra which followed Duke that he could have the job in his place if he got Fiddle Guy. But Fiddle claimed to leave the Oriental. Barker's next Harlem with Ellington, when, six months after beginning their run, the Washingtonians ran out.

Leonard Harper was a dancer and a publicity agent, who, like most of the other professionals in Harlem, had turned the hope from T. Scott. He came in when, as we saw, called. One night he offered Duke, once more the leader of the band, a proposition. Mr. Harper was producing the shows that started off '29-'30 in Columbia Inn, run by the brothers Zimmerman-Coskoff and George—and at the Hollywood, Coskoff's Inn was upstairs, right next to the Lafayette Theatre, the Hollywood was downstairs, 49th and Broadway. Would the Washingtonians like a crack at either job?

"Wouldn't we? We're there now," Duke answered.

The Hollywood was another headquarters, rather small, nagged with alcoholic vapors and cigarette smoke. Barker's had been patronized by a small number of "Mr. Cossacks." There men overran the Hollywood. "Mr. Cossacks" were spenders, in the language of musicians of the times, men with money, "gentlemen" of dollars in their name. At the upstairs place, the regular earnings of the Washingtonians had been \$25 a week supplemented by about ten a night made from their lateral "promotions." The tips were even bigger at the downstairs spot, and because, in effect, the real payments of the musicians, they looked upon their salary checks as supplementary and all but drew them

every. Sometimes, in the spirit of wild spending there was much money men collected in, a "Mr. Cossack" would show tables of \$25 and \$50 bills on the dance floor for the privilege of watching the women and musicians scramble for the mucky big pieces.

The Hollywood Café, 49th and Broadway. The Washingtonians had invited Duke, well known, was a sharper dancer than ever before. Otto, who described himself as "a sportsman—was a musician," was the nearest looking bald headed man on Broadway. But he too all his hair but a band of reverse hair on the back of his skull, as reverence, yet his natural good looks, fresh young face and good dress made him stand as much of an attraction for women as the more fully Ellington. Sonny was the poor man, appearance as a Little Willie from Long Beach, impudence as Sonny Green, drummer at the Hollywood. Fiddle Guy was New York all over as quietly self-assured as Sonny had been loud and boister in his proclamation of knowledge of persons and places in the big town, Arthur Whitted was as he always had been and would be, a quiet, motionless musician, who, having relinquished the medical career he had begun at Harvard University, was determined, now that he had put valves in lungs, made to tell of his love, to be as good a trumpet as one could be.

Sharp dancers, well known men of the fast world of 1929, they were, nonetheless, making their first downtown appearance in New York, their debut in the big town, and they were nervous.

"Make a good fellow," Duke said, as he signaled the little wit of his dance tie, clearly nervous.

"We do it, Daddy." Sonny promised, and the others nodded in unspoken confirmation. But they were all nervous, too.

Duke crack out as the day well-dressed bandstand, no dance at the piano. The others followed, in silent procession, Duke turned around to look at the well-dressed crowd, still reflecting the spirit of a hot summer in their dress, which was unusually formal. The men wore the blue serge jackets and cream trousers of the period, the women the thin-chested, low waisted, low-backed, high laced evening gowns of the flapper times, Otto,

Soney, Freddie, Artie seated themselves. Soney traded with his drum equipment, making casual conversations about its double-ness, promising himself a good replacement very soon.

Duke turned to the musicians. "It's time, fellows. Let's go."

"They want, but he didn't. He put his finger on his mouth, his right index finger, and tried to think what came next, what came first, what came at all. Freddie played louder as his lungs strung. Artie and Oren blew louder, but it was still a blank to Duke. He looked intently at the faces of his friends, then put down his eye blinking as completely as his mind.

Before the evening was over, Duke had played many more imaginary tunes on his lips with his finger, then upon the piano keyboard. But it was only a one-night stand his lips played; next night he was ready for work, the score was over, everybody left in confusion.

The manager of the Hollywood, manager and owner and close friend of everybody who worked for him, was a bright-looking little man named Leo Bernstein. His clothes gleamed properly, his conversation was perfectly light-hearted, as if a new idea were always being shaped in his head. His big new idea for the Hollywood was that it had had enough name changes in the past few years, sometimes as many as a dozen at a season. Therefore, the thing to do was to change the name from the Hollywood to the Kentucky Club, but this time with finality, this time for good, for keeps. Somewhere Leo and a pool-stealer broke from him, which had closed down the apple branch both so many times before, made the new name stick. The Ellington band and the dapper attractiveness of the owner so his new name kept "Kentucky" shining on the sign outside the club; the brilliance of the new band made "Kentucky" a by-word for good jazz, first in the minds of showbills, finally among a large number of night-clubbers in New York.

Showbills, with that astounding amount for sporting talent in showbills, were the first to recognize Duke and Oren and Soney and Artie and Freddie for the remarkable combination they were. All of them, not yet so hot as his Soney Ray but already similarly passed on devotion to his Soney,

Jimmy Thomas, and his various, child-analogue, Leo Clayton and Eddie Jackson, were devotees of the band. John was playing in the Winter Garden, Clayton, Jackson and Darius were just a block away in the Silver Slipper. Harry Richardson, who was playing piano in a basement saloon around the corner, accompanying the Dolly Sisters, sat between his own beating in the Washingtonians.

Bernstein was quickly impressed with his musicians, but not only with their music. He had other problems than that of providing music for his patron, he was greatly helped in the solution of some of these by the musicians.

"You know how it is, Soney," Leo told the drummer.

"No, Leo," Soney replied. "How is it?"

"Well, it is Prohibition," Bernstein explained, "and there are Federal Agents."

"Oh, huh."

"And, on the other hand—"

"I'm afraid of you—the good people will not be prohibited."

"You're right, Soney."

"You're right, I am, Leo."

"So we'll serve the people. But we gotta know who is and who isn't a Federal," Leo said, somewhat sadly.

"That's my job," Soney replied, "that's my job."

"What?"

"Just leave it to me. I'll stay 'em for drinks. If I say no—and if I said my head—they drink."

And so it was arranged, Soney Green grappled with the complicated problem of dealing or not dealing drinks under the rules of the Kentucky Club. For four-and-a-half years, he studied as closely his hand at the tables, after quick periods of those who requested whiskey, or what passed for it. And in four-and-a-half years, he never made a mistake. The Kentucky was never raided, no further waiting, cop-surrounded, safe-passing-representative of the Treasury Department or the Department of Justice ever dropped, invaded or used the Club, Leo's early refusal both in the seasonal drummer from Long Branch was completely paid.

Leo had more than faith in Sonny and the boys: he had great affection for them; he was as relaxed an employer with his employees as this very informal business has ever seen. Weekend dances were the big after-hours entertainment in Harlem as '33 and '34 and on through the early thirties. They were very big, very attractive, and the musicians couldn't wait to go through a beautiful dance night, to look out it again.

One night Leo was out there watching the band. He noted a haze in their playing, raised temples, raised noses, lack of interest in notes.

"Bored?" he asked Otto. Otto smiled.

"Can't get through fast enough?" he asked Duke. Duke shook his head.

"All right," he said, "get through with that set and come on my office." They looked nervously at him and went quickly back to the business of playing their music. They took longer than they usually did on a set of numbers. Then the five of them filed into Leo's office looking a little sheepish, grinning by turns and wincing.

"What took you so long?" Leo said.

They looked at each other. What was coming?

"Longer you talk, later you get spoken," Leo said.

"Huh?"

"Now you, Otto," Leo said, "you can't wear that dirty old dress at a beautiful dance. Take it off."

"That's the only shirt I got on the job."

"Take it off and take mine," and he stripped off his own.

"And you, Sonny," Leo said, "put on this ring." He gave Green a five-karat diamond ring taken from his own finger. He strengthened his pulled-down jacket, gave Guy a handkerchief, then lined them up in front of him.

"Now then, gentlemen," he said, "you look as if you worked for me! Get the hell out of here and don't go home until you're good and pleased."

Getting pleased was a coach, but the boys didn't go to the beautiful dances simply to locate three spots or spill their nerves. They also went to watch and be watched. Jeff Blue's

was the beautiful dance place, Aggr and Leroy, next to the Cotton Club. Around four or five in the morning they'd start to wrap it, the day's famous musicians, little known show people, beer runners and their overlords, and a throng of colored citizens, Harlem intellectuals, who always knew where to go for a good time.

Lots of noise at these dances. Lots of heat, generated by closely packed crowds. Drifting. Much smoking and snoring of big beds. An occasional fight. A great noise of high life. Pulses seemed to double their size. You feared rather than danced. The Westinghouse music well with the excitement; they were readily accepted by them, particularly by the musicians. Paul Whiteman, having accepted the jazz theme, was a very welcome friend, a black nightclubber, a black patron. He would come down to the Kennedy, bringing his own house band with him ("much better's your stuff"). He'd plant a cottee note on the piano (just a note of appreciation), sit down and grin all night with pleasure ("That's our Papa," the musicians said).

The Whiteman organization, drop in onlays and loans and suggest a beleaguering of a musical family, was a black ring at the Friar Royal, 41th and Broadway. The guys came over to the Kennedy all the time. These white musicians, at the top of their profession, liked good jazz and good partners. They drew no color line. They were "slope" but "slope" who were black, not musicians.

"Otty" is the colored man's word for white, it is Pig Latin for "let." The use of this word is of doubtful significance; it tells more just how strongly the Negro feels about his white brother, whose own feelings, and actions, have been so far from fraternal toward the darker-skinned fellow. The Ellington musicians, all but Sonny Green, had had every reason to hate white people coming, as they did, from Westinghouse, to encourage a dip, along color lines as any on the deep South, with a few more employment opportunities, perhaps a few less Jim Crow demands, but with a general conception of race as Negro, as perhaps vaguely related to a Lynch mob's. The Ellington musicians had, nonetheless, only a halfhearted acceptance of race differences. To

them, when they arrived in New York, it was simply a matter of slight readjustment, of a freer life but one well ingrained along usual lines, with their own places in gay places, but a distinct apart, with more relaxing permitted downtown, but with your place, black men, in restaurants and night clubs and dances, and not sure you if you crossed the wrong one, where the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution were unheard of and colored people "simply did not belong." You could be asked to leave, politely. You could be told to leave, rudely. You could be thrown out. In any one of a dozen ways you could be embarrassed, shocked, humiliated. New York was like that. But the Washingtonians didn't leave: they were here; and when they thought about it, more often black to skin pigments, but in the wider range of mental colors.

The entrance of people like Leo Burnett and Paul Whiteman made a difference, constructed their freedom, brought them all the way from a numbness about themselves as Negroes to a new appreciation of the goodness and decency, the fairness, consideration and real understanding of some whites. In spite of its name, the Kentucky Club was the scene of tolerance and appreciation, of the breaking down of many racial barriers for Ellington and company. Discrimination could be forgiven; those didn't have to be a Jim Eddie or a Mr. Charlie (one or all names for the two races), a black or a white, a Negro or an ally. In music, many cases, has become friend in Burnett's Kentucky at 222 Street and Broadway in the middle of downtown Manhattan.

CHAPTER FOUR

ECHOES OF THE JUNGLE

THE *Washingtonians* were not there for the whites, the ones for the "New Negro." African sculpture had not yet made its breakthrough, many into the houses of the great, the great, the wealthy, but the joyful opinion of this postwar generation had found new admission in the "African" movement. The Negro, the New Negro was encouraged to develop African and pseudo-African themes because they were exotic, oh so bizarre! The noise of jungle drums and their post-impersonal was such a pleasant change from the record of alien orchestras in symphonies and large dance bands first swing led by the orders of the jungle, great sweeps of brilliant hue, were such a diverting novelty! And the frank attitude toward sex of these "Africans," the free indulgence, how tempting that was, too, how tempting!

Carl Van Vechten, a questionable music critic, an unquenchable, still sincere devotee of the New African cult, gave parties for his colored friends, called the movement up, wrote about it. He wrote a novel, *Nigger Heaven*, a pathetic variation of Negroes and Negro music, but most important, close its narrative as clear water was its demonstration of a lovelessness which passed for courage, a surface insight which many thought profound. Van Vechten, and others as retail imitation, looked about the racial term, "Nigger."

Negro poets flourished. Claude McKay came from Jamaica, described American Negro culture in Kansas and New York, courted and was courted by radicals, and wrote about Harlem

Madison, in 1901, after preliminary skirmishes with the *Springs of New Hampshire*. Later, in 1909, he wrote a novel about the Harlem of the next century, *Minor to Major*. A background in Jamaica, where such discrimination as existed was more race, made McKay a revolutionary pamphleteer in his poems.

Like men we'll lay the murderous, cruelly pack,
Flashed in the wall, dying, hair-lifting back!

Guamán-Collins, a New York University student, wrote a searing, seething lyric, *Color*, and built a large substance for his talent. In 1929, at the end of the era, he sent his publishers a poem from Peru, *The Black Cabaret, Tragically Delighted*,¹ he said, "in white America." It is he who anticipated the completely new, brutally shocking imagery of Louis Allen's song, *Strange Fruit*, and Lillian Smith's novel which increased Allen's title. But this was ten years before that song, fifteen before the book!

Somewhere the Southland rears a tree,
And many colors there may be
Like ours is, that one unknown,
Whom in costly fruits his groves.

James Weldon Johnson, lyric writer for his brother Rosamond's speeches and recited songs, United States consul, lawyer, propagandist and poet, wrote *Fifty Years*, a review in verse form of his people's achievements after the Civil War. This was in 1917, before the big march for the colored Negro tapes. Five years earlier he had written a book moderately successful commercially but altogether effective as a treatment of a Negro's faith in people and progress, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. In this new era, James Weldon Johnson had his biggest career, with a collection of Negro poems in verse, *God's Trombones*. This was 1925, height of the nation's non-human dream of certain slaves to Negroes and their art. The book was the announcement, not only of a writer's religion and racial idealization, but of the idealization of music, of jazz instruments in particular, with his race. It was an announcement of Negroes and jazz which was in constant for a long

time through the writing of younger Negroes, such as Langston Hughes, and older white poets, such as Vachel Lindsay. Lindsay wrote *The Congo, A Study of the Negro Race* and *The Poetical Washington Trilogy*, carrying jazz music and speaking straightforwardly about Negroes and Negro problems, straightforwardly and also rather actively. In *Samuel* just he named the name of the music which was reforming him, and again caught some of the rhythm of jazz, some of the feeling of the Negro himself and more of the feeling of others about him.

Salient about Negroes was not confined to whom. Negroes themselves were caught upon the Africanism which swept New York and most of the other big cities in the early twenties and spread with this country's intelligence and propaganda machine until the fourth decade of this century. In the war year of 1917, another Jamaican Negro came to the United States, one Marcus Garvey. He and a friend, Amy Ashwood, had founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association in 1914, in Kingston, Jamaica. He was President, she was Secretary. They didn't have anyone under them at first, few later joining Jamaica, but the American Negro was more receptive. The first year in the United States—only fourteen members. One more year, 1916, and there were 1,000. Then, long Garvey was arrested for falsifying the American District Attorney of New York. He became a popular figure among his people, a winged Negro Colored soldier returning from overseas, with a determination to implement their constitutional and statutory freedom with action to guarantee it, called round him. One year later, 1919, it was the biggest mass movement the Negroes had ever known. There were three million Garveyites!

What did Garvey preach, in his whirling, sweeping announcement? Back to Africa! All of Africa for the Negro! The Negro must leave his Africa, a home like the white man's Europe and America. If the impetus of the world wouldn't give them Africa, they would take it! Take it! Take it! Back to Africa! The Negro's home! He organized with thoroughness. There were uniformed Garvey troops. Color parades at meetings. Marches through the streets of Harlem and Chicago's South

Inde and other Negro quarters. From all over the United States, the West Indies and Central America, money poured in, as Negroes poured with furniture and clothing and last, always to support Marcus Garvey and pass a continent for themselves. He declared himself Africa's Emperor and President, appointed nobles under him, distributed legislative executive chairman ships so lavishly as he did his playboy titles. He was delegate to the League of Nations, bargaining for Africa. He bought a couple of newspapers, put them into operation between New York and Africa and called them the Black Star Line. "The Black Star Line," he said, "will sail to Africa if it sails on sea of blood." He stood up in Madison Square Garden and defied the police, who were after him, to arrest him. He was a romantic here, a Woodland thrasher, a wanderer, a landowner, darker but not much more unrepentant, Hitler.

He never edited a program, never offered to his millions of followers more than dreams and marriage passage to Africa, which was not his Empire, and he sat in England. He was not above playing with the Ku Klux Klan, the most vicious and violent and violent destruction of his people, to make the Negro population from their southern provinces to Africa safe and safe. He was not above using the United States much to do, broad, according to the United States Government. He was convinced of this reason change in 1918, imprisoned, deported to Jamaica and ended up in London, where negotiations, begun in the West Indies, to effect a peace between him and the British Empire, finally succeeded. Search supporter of the League, he was last heard of (and seen) in Hyde Park, welcoming the highly unrevolutionary program of Africa for the English, who already have so much of it.

Ellington was not unattracted by the Negro revival, by Van Vocher's party world, Callow's and McKay's and Johnson's scented incubator. Garvey's marching man. Neither he nor any of the men who played with him was a Garveyite. But they were affected by this too Africanism, by the rise in the Negroes' consciousness of their ethnicity. Whether it was an accident, a charming trick of him, or simply Ellington's dy. innocent-imp-

prising way of doing things, clearly after the band moved into the Kentucky (John McFaywood), the first of the "jungle" sounds moved over the landscape with them, the first of the grooves which have typified Duke's music ever since.

Charlie Lewis joined the band. Charlie Lewis was a New York boy; he'd played at all the Harlem spots. But the music he made with his mouth was more, as Duke says, "jungle-ese." He used the top of a bottle for a mouth and played all around the bottom of his lungs, growling effishly, catlike, suggestively, jungle-moodily at the Kentucky customers. He tried to make the musicians sound like a symphony and yelled off long columns of their notes, broken by those impudent shouts of scat, a hiss, a laugh, a yelp, which European masters would call *ad libitum*, *ritardando*, *tristano*, and in which the waddy critics could indulge his wildest listeners about "the primitive Negro soul."

Ellington's consciousness of the value of these sounds took shape slowly. He certainly was not going to accept the values' applied at face value: he had too little respect for momentum of any kind, and intellectual racist doctrine left him an impressed. But he was strongly aware of the mechanical sounds of the world around him and determined to reproduce them in his music. It was still a few years only, in 1913, for his reproductions of the rhythms of the jungle, of the swimmers of the colored man's dream, his black and tan freedom, many years later he sought to capture the nervous rhythms of a crowded Harlem woman's stride, the crocodile and downpour of a railroad train, the Daybreak Express. Like the Love, who painted true pictures of *The Boy in the Boat*, *Morning Star* and *Shipping News*, Duke's palette was constrained to a pale impressionism in the first years of his stay at the Kentucky. But Charlie Lewis called the phallic surface of Ellington's "conservative music" with a series of do-wah's and re-wah's which were like the impact of a busy word, a busy phrase, wonderful patches of one note harmonies. They added a fifth to the Washingtonian music which made an already one-of-a-kind way hard unique.

The musicians themselves, far from recognizing their own

stable qualities, were joyfully settling down into their new routine. Sonny never made a mistake in slapping customers for drinks, and the customers saw to it that he got plenty business. Among the customers were purgers, both women, bootleggers, the minority of the underworld, men who lived hard and drunk harder. Around various parts of their persons, they carried just touches of New York's "Red Rubber" or worn out, if they were more fairly, bravely or broadly. One of these rascals would hit a trouser leg and reveal a bottle strapped to his left calf. Another had moved his gun to a specially built pants pocket and concealed his handle in his under-arm holster; others, less ingenious, carried their liquid spirits in hip pockets or strapped to their wrists. When they came to the Kennedy, grateful for Sonny's kindnesses or the quality of Ellington's music, they would leave a tip. Out from hip or side pocket, shoulder holster or leg, would come a pint bottle. In testimony the tipping man would drink half the bottle, in fraternity and good gulp, leaving the rest to be quaffed similarly by Sonny, Duke, Pettie, Charlie or Arlie.

The drinking got serious. A musician who made music, who arrived at seven o'clock for a seven o'clock job, was a punk. His musician considered himself a person of no drink; a job drunk often and thoroughly. He would go up to 'the Mexican's' place, Gomez, who had never seen Mexico, was an affable Carolinian of Latin ancestry, whose "crew" had none; there the musician would see his liquor and night—sometimes the new alcohol and some mild flavoring—drank in the next night. He would come down to work today but not even slightly affected as his instrument: the keys were still in the same place, the mouthpiece exactly where it had been the night before, the music still came out of the bell of the horn. It was occasionally disturbing this, when everything else in the musician's vicinity had changed so much, keys, mouthpiece and bell should remain fixed. The music was the fixed value in these musician's lives and they valiantly adjusted themselves to this one fact in their world of business.

The routine was established, this was the way they lived, after

they hit the Kennedy. With characters like Irene and Father Wiley to implement the pattern, it was inevitable.

Bubba started up in late 1934, not exactly, accidentally, from local club Like Charlie, he didn't really work, played what he wanted to, when he wanted to. Like Charlie, he pursued. Like Charlie he was a New Yorker. James Miley was a prodigious cinema room leader, of the West End Street gang, the kids who lived at the edge of Hell's Kitchen on New York's West Side. These kids overstepped the group just south of them, in the office and furrows and dances. They also saw played them, a number of great colored jazzmen grew up to the so-called third Street. "Jumper" Bobby Lewis, who played ten trumpet with Fletcher Henderson and Chick Webb, Freddy Jenkins who joined Duke in 1934 as trumpet and melody solo, Sonny Carter, from Henderson through McKenney's Cotton Pickers, and the Chocolate Dandies, to his own excellent band, a brilliant trumpet and also music—these were Miley's students. Miley taught them much of what they learned of the fundamentals of their home and the art of music. "Bubba" the nickname is an extension of "Buck" which he picked up as a young boy gapped around New York, played all the Harlem places and found his way downtown to Rascapoor's, where the Original Dixieland Band had made its stand.

Now, with a face as round as the sun, bright brown as the clouds, brilliant gold in the mouth, his sparkling bling spreading eyes below him, Bubba laughed a fit, and had strong lines of laughter cut across his face, his eyes danced when he smiled and he they presented, as did his music. 'He was completely confident, irresponsible,' once Hardwick recalls. 'Working as all for him to stop in the middle of a chorus, remembering some comment, double up in laughter, nothing coming out of his horn but wind.'

Whirlwind was all his going back to Howard, to resume his medical career, which still had a marked the primary stage of Hippocrates such and doctor's degree. Duke played with him, but Arthur seemed to go, so Arthur went and Bubba was marked as the man to succeed him.

"Let's go up after him," someone suggested.

"Why not just send for him?" Otto asked.

"Don't do it," Duke explained, "but he won't come."

"Why not?"

"Happy where he is. Says when Whoozel goes back, we'll see him go."

"Oh."

"Let's get him," Sammy says. And off they go.

When the Washingtonians arrive at the little upstairs spot at which Bulber's playing, they sit down with him as if it's just a regular club.

"How's trick? Think? Make?" they ask.

"Fine, fine," Bulber replies.

They take a couple of drinks together. Because there are ten of them, just one of him, they are able to spend their liquor money, make it last good, but say well on their feet. Bulber gets juiced. When he's really soft, they lead him out.

"Numb look me," Sammy explains.

"That's our pal," Otto tells the bartender, "we'll take care of him."

They take care of him. When Bulber's Milky comes on, he's playing trumpet at the Kentucky Club, with Duke Ellington's Washingtonians.

They tell him Bulber got his blues.

He'd walk along the street with Duke. He'd see a sign. Advertising a cleaning and dyeing service, say, Phil Cooper's cleaning and dyeing service. Cooper the Cleaner. Or Cooper the Dyer. Or Cooper, cleaning and dyeing, ladies' wearers, again repeated, etc. Bulber would look at it. Then he'd stop it. Then he'd sing it.

"Cooper the cleaner," Bulber'd say.

"Uh-huh," Duke would affirm.

"Cooper the cleaners-uh?" Bulber'd sing.

"Yeah!" Duke would ask.

From simple signs, Bulber would construct "riffs," two and four-bar phrases, which he would hammer over in his mind, peering the rhythmic scenes from the rise and fall of the syllables in

the signs, constructing the melody from the way his voice leaped over the words and consonants. Then an interval of a fourth, a third, a seventh. Then a Milky melody, off, again. Then much music for Ellington.

On nights it would be in church, leaving the organists play a further hymn. Even the second time someone and you got a great gas once. Bulber stands, and he does, and he gets a fine jump figure. From the strand of organ and choir at church, he got some of his most famous solos. His twenty-four-bar manuscript, the improvisation he worked on to his own *Black and Tan Fantasy*, was based, he said, on a Spiritual he number used to sing *Blasphemy*. Actually, there are other hymn manuscripts in his sets, but the whole is permeated with the melodic substance of the Spiritual and helps to give to *Black and Tan* that evocation of race and age, or remarkable cross-race church, which is perhaps its greatest effect.

The sources of Bulber's music are important; they estimate how broad the sources of Ellington's music are, and how large, how profound are the dimensions of jazz in this land. These men—strongly addicted to "parking," to long, stiff drinking hours, to making music in such letter-darkness surroundings as in afterhours joints, a blurry spotwork, somebody's "buddy list" that parties and their regular jobs of multi-colored solos, accompaniments and combinations of both from everything around them and reflected, in nobody before, the street and tempo and mood of their country.

The crowd, as Bulber, was a fabulous test. He could use it to imitate the huge sounds of grassywood dance, the late night calls of slow freight trains or the simple crying of a deserted woman, some of the inspirations of which his *Black and Tan* and *Just in Time* *Twinkle-On*, which became the Ellington band's theme, He could laugh at you and at you laughing with him, at it. Get everything but *Fun and Fantasy* *Fourth*. He always was a complected, a man that filled the ball of the lane, the bottom of a plumbier's rubber plunger, which he would hold in the palm of his right hand and pull in and from the trumpet. But, say as it stood, other instruments couldn't imitate it well.

five years later, Charles Williams, "Cootie," took his place, and about some months of study, mastered the technique. Tricky Sam picked it up from him, when he explained back Charlie Ives in 1928, and was called upon to reproduce the language of Ives' "Jazz, its substance is definite pitch, its wit and sarcasm, comedy and high tragedy of sound. Ives' growling, blowing with his lip and, with cup and sometimes with double over the musician's bell, was familiar to Tricky, they were close friends. But Tricky didn't think he was up to Charlie.

Tricky, as small as Charlie, was then just Joe Nanton, grand possessor of a surname which only his family owned ("No other Nanton is the place back or any place else"). He felt like "just Joe Nanton." He and Charlie would wander around the uptown spots together. Charlie would suggest going to some place and playing a "cutting session," the name they had for jam get-togethers in the twenties.

"See, man, you don't get me in there," Tricky protested, on his mile, lanky but high pitched voice.

"Why not, boy?" Ives inquired.

"Am' good enough."

"What you mean?"

"Well," Tricky would explain, "just listen to that guy blowing from home now. He's too good, man. I'm nowhere. I can't blow before, after or beside him."

Before, after or beside that guy, you're gone," Ives would reply. "Why, he's nothing. . . . You just full of tricks. You can play so much better than him, 'We're gone, he.' And so they went.

Joe Nanton was close to Charlie Ives and close to Bubber Miley. He had met Bubber for the first time when the trumpeter was playing at the White Swan Dance Hall on 33d Street, just after leaving Mamie Smith's Jazz Band (the little band that brought Coleman Hawkins and Joe Smith, singer and trumpeter, to New York), just before going to work at Reinhardt's. Bubber and Joe Nanton hit it right off. They built a "beautiful friendship" on the basis of similar taste in the play

ing of brass, the drinking of liquor and the disposition of their leisure time as those vital persons.

Tricky joined the band under protest, but not the same sort as Bubber's. Joe just didn't want to take his friend's place.

Duke came to him with an offer.

"Joe," Duke said, "Charlie Ives is leaving."

"Doesn't matter," Tricky said. "Good man."

"So are you."

"Not as good as Charlie."

"We want you to take his place."

"Charlie'll be back soon, won't," Tricky said.

"No, he won't." Duke would hint.

"I can't take a job away from my friend," Tricky protested again.

"He took himself away," Duke insisted. "The job's open. Somebody's got to fill it. You're the right man. So—"

Tricky promised to come up and join the band that night.

All night the band sat around, waiting for their new musician. Without Ives or the new man, there were big holes in the six arrangements. One and Bubber got tired of chattering on into choruses. But later, longer he danced, Tricky didn't show.

Next night, Duke went down and got him.

"You're coming with me," he told the reluctant Duke wannabe with the drinking pace away and the wily head.

"Guess I am," Tricky said.

Duke waited "no" time until he got dressed, and then, as Tricky says, "He TOOK me with him." (The capitals are Tricky's.)

The band was playing at the Flamingo then, at 30th Street and Broadway, a short way-on from their regular address at the Kennedy that spring of 1928. But the Flamingo wasn't paying off so, after a delay on the first week's pay, and no pay at all the second, the Washingtonians left. They went up to New England, to Salem, Massachusetts, which, since the summer of 1924, had been their hot weather home.

They played in saloons at the Charleston Ballroom. Sometimes you could find them, saloons or other houses. More often you could not. Duke was usually out with the police force's Lieutenant Dunn, who later became Duke's Mayor, and then his Representative in Congress. On with the other Washington women, he was over at the Coast Guard barracks, or being whisked around the Solom-Morikitchland Harbor. All of Duke followed the band, left as it came from Washington, New York and New Jersey were natives, almost as much a part of the tradition of their town as National Horsemen and the House of Representatives.

The band returned to the Kentucky Club, after coming down a heading in West Virginia. "The South Got down, not" was the constant of opinion, and the band was still being seen, pretty much, by a consensus of opinion. The return was a happy one, not only because everybody loved coming back to New York, but because interest in the band had deepened, renewed, and the depth and intensity of that interest had been unashamedly demonstrated. They were to make records!

A second making session, in three days, was almost comparable in a colored band playing the Wildcat (which never happened, of course) it was a seasoned crew: Ellington, Henderson, Davis, Guy and Greer had, with the addition of a man on wood bass, Ben Edwards, been approached earlier in the year to make records. This they had done, with two trumpets: Harry Cooper and Lottay Knudde, Jimmy Harrison on cornet, Don Redman, George Thomas and Prince Robinson on reeds, added for the date. They had made that date for Gennett, a big "over record" company, which sold more of its discs in the South and the Negro quarters of the North. Gennett wanted blues and Greer got blues, but only two of the four sides seemed like broadcast material to the record company and as two were never issued. And the two that did come out, *If You Can't Hold That Man and Foster Got Those Wines On Back Again Again*, disappeared so fast from the market that nobody seems to have a copy of the first record of Ellington's.

Another date for Gennett produced *Antony Crackers and L.B.*

Farina, with Charlie Johnson on trumpet and Prince Robinson on clarinet the only additions. And then records for Reddy, Fats, Harney and Gennet followed. Obscure labels today, and the biggest then, these did have a following and helped add to the reputation of the band, talked on records at the Duke Ellington Washingtonians, or simply the Washingtonians. They made nearly three for three labels, eight sides at most for *The Soul Of Lee and Eagle Tail Key*, *Tramaine Shaw* and *George Greer*. Then, on their last date for Gennet, they issued one standard recording, none of the great Ellington or Washingtonian numbers of the day, *Just A Little Trouble On, Jubilee Stamp and Take It Easy*. And with the introduction of these notes came the introduction of the Ellington band in important recording society, in important broadcasting and to a country-wide reception which would permit enjoyment of the expression, a large personnel, a broader instrumentation.

Ben Edwards was the band's first wood bass man. They really wanted a strong bass, but where could you get a strong bass in the Kentucky? The calling was too low over the bandstand. But Ben Edwards, who looked like a cross between the two instruments, played "a hell of a wood bass." He played five G's on the horn, a phenomenal five-note range, most men believed with less than half that. He would run over various passages on the instrument, rough fipping and accurate fingering of the valves demanded. Then he would remove his fingers from the valves and play the note and work only his lips to form and hold the note, and he gave them perfect vibration and production. Now, who has since banged around with half a dozen colored hands, didn't say more than a year with the Washingtonians, but he left a strong impression. "He could cut rings around anybody man on tuba," his colleagues said, and say, and they offer his rings, Bowles technique and mounting lip control as proof.

Max Baer, who succeeded Ben when the band went into the Charleston Club over the Winter Garden for an all-time two-week run, was another phenomenon. "He scared us," the musicians recall. Max had a broken jaw-line. He took guests

des of asphalt (rubbed with whiting) to keep the accompanying girls from falling him. But he continued to blow them, to make blow anybody else's butt. The band would come into a studio, a theater or a big ballroom, and Duke was ready.

"See that!" he would cry, pointing at the ceiling of the hall, the supports under the balcony of the theater, the beams across the studio's ceiling.

"Be careful!" One might say, or Sonny, knowing what was coming next, and still wondering.

"Look strong, don't they? Watch me," Max continued, "just watch me. I'll go those rooms. I'll make 'em shake."

Stunned just long enough to be set the table mouthpiece against his teeth, Max would blow. Once, twice, three times. And the rafters shook, the beams rocked, the walls shook the hall.

"Jawed 'em, didn't I?"

"Did indeed." And that is Sonny or Duke or anybody around would be to reward the tooth clutched in the floor as the first. Tough enough for a well man, with perfectly shaped and healthy jaws and teeth, impossible for a musician with a broken jaw. But, impossible as it seemed, he did it. "Did indeed."

Shortly after returning from Berlin, in 1924, the band got an offer to go into the Flamingo Club, down Broadway from the Kentucky. Duke had written the score for *The Chocolate Kiddies*, in 1924, and through the show never got to Broadway (it did get to Berlin, Germany, where a year later, Jack Ralston's enormous publishing firm spread some of its members around and they started circulating a reputation as a showman under the title *Kingpin*). The Flamingo Club wanted a band that could play show tunes—straight. With the band's reputation as a purveyor of improvisation music, Duke's background as a writer of show tunes, the Washingtonians were a natural for the Flamingo. In they went.

"Now look, fellows," Duke explained, "we play straight, not No taking. No ad lib. Strictly as written."

"Yeah," the band acknowledged, "we mean hear the melody."

"Geeza," the boys agreed.

The first night they managed, somehow, by great self-control, repulsive reactions to the music called out by Duke, still more so than desire to make good at the distinguished Flamingo Club, somehow they managed.

The second night they managed. But you could see that Ralston was uncomfortable. He pulled at his collar a lot, scratched his back in an odd scratched brown shirt.

"The sick of this stuff," Ralston said.

"I know, Red," Duke comforted him, "but look at the show we're getting."

"Class," Ralston smiled.

The third night, Ralston went. In the middle of a delivery show tune, everybody laughing graciously over its dull lyrics—most, but playing it straight, Ralston lifted him to mouth and blew. The band lifted right with him. Trumps came up, they began to go. Still with the same, but with the trumpets. God knows, the janglebugs fell right on. They weren't called janglebugs then, but piano they did, that night, in the suddenly suspended Ellington band.

Next night they came on the job, Ralston arrived with gloves on, open, elegant case, but in his hand, an assistant of the manager's "money" dress. The band struggled as they Ralston. A few minutes later, they heard some music coming from the entrance of the hall.

"Look and see what it is," Duke called out to Ralston.

Ralston walked out, still in elegant shirt. He ran back, his elegant gone.

"It's another band, Duke. There's another band on the street." He stopped and looked around at the other guys. "Hey, that's great, isn't it?" He smiled broadly.

A few minutes later, the manager came in, walked slowly over to each of the boys with a gap envelope. Two weeks salary and a paid trip.

Ralston left immediately, got out of the director at the street level, walked over to his Oakland, a car almost as small as a Buick or Austin, which Red had just bought, and stopped the

back of his chauffeur's head with his hands, which wouldn't help bumping the driver.

"Homo, James," he said.

Fortunately, Les McComb was fresh out of a head at the Kennedy. Hearing of the Ellington crew's plight, he offered them their old job back. They were glad.

There the additions to the band really started moving fast, but not all the more important angle change in Duke's life took place. Whether you judge it as good as bad, here here or admire him, the advent of Irving Mills is placed in the life of Edward Kennedy Ellington and all those associated with him. When Mills stepped in, musicians and dancers stepped out; big business took over and the way of the Ellington orchestra was made inevitable. That with this one should also come serious difficulties for the man at the head, a disposing some of personal and collective tragedy which has never let these brilliant musicians, that, too, was inevitable.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DUKE STEPS OUT

IRVING MILLS WAS A BARBIE STYLE MAN, FINE IN HIS DRESS, slick in his manner. In the late twenties, he was a successful song publisher and a band manager beginning to come up with the expanding band business. He was handling a band now, a family, a house. When he found Duke, the one of the first and last, the comfort of the animal, were assured.

Irving walked into the Kennedy Club one night in 1928. There they were on the main stage floor, Hardback, Miley and Newton four rhythms, Ellington, Guy, Edwards and those. They were playing W. C. Handy's *Sir Lonesome Blues*, which, at most from the day it was written in 1914, had become a jazz classic, the jazz classic. The Washingtons put their individual stamp on the performance. The tempo introduction was pretty much as Handy had written it, but from there, try to find St. Louis, Kansas City or any other Missouri town, it was simply the blues, with a couple of progressions here and there which followed the original. But, close to or far from William Christopher Handy's song, the sound the seven men built up was impressive.

"What's that you're playing, Duke?" Irving Mills asked the leader.

"*The Lonesome Blues*, of course," the leader answered.

"You don't say?"

"But I do."

"Hmm."

Mills was impressed and a few days later was down to see Duke again. He had some ideas.

"How about doing records, Duke?" Irving asked.

"We're done records."

"For whom?"

"General. Buddy. Perfect."

"Good! By How about Columbia?"

"Well, how about it?"

"We'll arrange it," Irving Mills promised.

Mills arranged that, and almost everything else Ellington did from then on for thirteen years. A contract was later set between the two men, giving each 45 per cent of a new composition, Ellington, two, and giving lawyer Sam Beaman the remaining 10 per cent. Duke, in turn, was given a share of some other Mills properties.

Irving, whose meteoric career almost justified the assumption that he was the Mills of the Gods, changed things pretty fast. The band now had a real leader. Ellington was front man, not merely arranger, pianist, and business representative of the Washingtonians. The idea that Freddie they had advanced several times in '32, '34 and '35, that the guys should incorporate as a cooperative band, was certainly dead now. This was a band now, not big job, but growing, with Edward Kennedy Ellington as President and Irving Mills as Treasurer.

In June of 1935 the band went up to New England to do some out-of-town and play another summer at the Charleston Ballroom at Salem Willows. Harry Carey joined them at a single round they were making at Wollington-on-Charles, Wiltshire, Mass., a suburb of Boston.

Harry Carey was a Boston boy, and just a boy, too, when he joined Ellington, seventeen years old. He'd been playing professionally only two years in 1933, having kicked around with a few local bands. A highland midget of Harry's was Trombadorio, the brilliant alto saxophone. In later years with Benny Goodman and various other studio orchestras and, finally, leader of his own outfit, Harry had heard the Ellington band a couple of times as its one neighbor in and around Boston. His instrument was the alto sax there, as he paid particular attention to Otto's deft manipulation of the keys of his horn.

Carey, young, fresh-looking and kind of cocky, looked up at

the bandstand. Otto, only five years older, looked ancient to Harry because of his features. But his glowing technique didn't escape the youngster. He was amazed at Hardhead's ease on the alto horn, his reputation of his race, his creamy tone. Harry turned to his companion.

"Learn to that old man play all that stuff," he said.

"I know," said his companion.

"Dunno," said Harry. "That's a lot of know, that really is."

Harry particularly remembered hearing Otto play *Jag Walk*. Very heavy stuff. When Harry Carey was hired, he was expected to play just that heavy stuff with Duke. Otto was not an one of his equals. "Very temporary," he called them, but he was out, and a replacement was needed. Harry had built a reputation playing around Boston with Bobby Sawyer and Harry Sapros' bands and his name made sense to the Washingtonians. He was hired.

The Ellington band had another multiplying stimulus in their Boston audience where they remembered very well when they left New England. A stout, little guy still in his prime, he used to stand around listening intently, sometimes with his growing excitement apparent, but most often with almost another intent. He'd also kicked around Boston with local bands, he'd played with Bobby Sawyer the same year Carey had, 1935, but he was better than Harry, younger-looking, less conspicuous, though four years older. That was Cornelius Hodges, "Johnny" to his friends.

Johnny was a Cambridge boy who got some of his music in school, some more in private study. He cut out the same year Harry did reaching New York in 1933 and joining Chas. Mark for his first crack at the big ones. He looked so much like Chuck that all of the famous little drummer's friends and associates called them twins, and until today many assume that relationship between Hodges and the late leader, though actually there was no tie other than that of friendship.

Harry Carey was in, Otto was out (temporarily, "very temporarily"). Harry joined in there to play Salem Willows with

the band that summer, and he was just fresh looking enough, just enough of a stranger, so that it was reasonable he would be invited out for an evening with May. Being invited out for an evening with May was a regular routine for new musicians who played Salome. It was quite a treat.

Some of the members of the Ellington band proposed an evening's entertainment to Carney.

"Let's have a time!" Bobber suggested.

"I'm on," Harry answered, "but this is my territory. I should be the host and name the place and the people and get the liquor."

"No, no," Sonny laughed, "we know Salome, and besides, you're new. This is our place."

"That's right," Bobber added, "and furthermore, we know just the place and just the party. Good men liquor, a great place, a wonderful time."

"That sounds wonderful," Harry agreed.

"May is her name," Bobber explained, "and she is really fun."

"Yes indeed," Sonny corroborated.

"But don't forget," Bobber admonished, "the experts as to having the greatest, lots of them, and some you get but if we can find it and some pop solo, you know, 'it' everything."

And so they set out for May's place with packages, food, drink, more musicians, you and solo. And somehow the bulk of the package was in Carney's hands. They walked over to May's through Salome's old back streets, through narrow lanes crowded with weathered frame houses, dark even in the moonlight night because they were loaded so close to each other. Finally, one too dark street brought them to a gloomy old place, something right out of the seventeenth century and apparently unconnected with them. Clayboards hung on the walls were placed against each other, making a wall, complaining noise, a wall in the early morning air. A few window shutters flapped back and forth across the window, adding another disconcerting note. The doorway was dark, only one weak light shone from the white house, up in the second story.

"Here," said Carney, "very looking."

"Beautiful inside," Sonny assured him.

"May's wonderful," Bobber said, "just don't worry. We're gonna have a time."

"Let's go," Harry said, gathering strength.

They opened the door, which squeaked violently.

"What's there?" a woman's voice called.

"It's me, May," Sonny replied.

A lightly clad woman came to the head of the stairs, but before she could open her mouth, a deep-set man rushed past her. He looked down angrily at Carney, who, of course, was leading the way, headless as usual.

"No put in the guy who's been looking around with my wife," he said Carney. "I've been waiting to get a hold of you." And with that he dashed down the stairs after Harry, joined in hand, diving in the air.

Carney took rapid flight, clutching the bundle, which he was too nervous and scared and bewildered to put down. The man gave good chase, diving in his wake. Where they got to a principal street the outraged husband pulled something about a wonder, about this man (Carney) showing his wife or his house, or something. Frowning policeman joined in. They fired their guns, one, and then said Carney had run faster than a rabbit was he entirely free of husband, cops and frightening questions. He put down his bundle at last. Winded, he leaned against a tree, puffing, coughing, still frightened. Suddenly, Sonny and Bobber showed up, a good deal less than winded, and really not frightened at all. They showed Harry to May's back door and then explained the gag to him. There was his licensed way, the good prices at both the musicians and the members of the Salome police department, who, of course, had cooperated with the businessmen in putting on the horror show.

About every band which has ever played Salome, or Salome Williams, or nearly territory, has had the gag pulled on it, just up, "Oh, May" to a musician who's played Salome and watch him fall out. They all think it's funny, they all like to witness

her sister their own or a colleague's experience with the pistol packing pops and the police.

Once returned to the Ellington band, shortly after Harry passed, and the Washingtonians had a good session. They began doubling, Otto playing clarinet—which he had done only upon occasion in the past—weak more regularly, and Casey making first overtures on the baritone, which Otto had played earlier. When Baby Jackson joined shortly after, playing vocal accompaniment, as well as alto and tenor, the music seemed enormous to the old timers. It was possible really to arrange for them, to get depth and breadth of tone and range, a whole variety of clarinet harmonies, and, with trumpet, trombone and piano, to get low, free and eloquent writing. Very exciting.

The additions were made, the band was bigger, its one highest pay better. That was a beginning as far as living Middle was concerned. Next, radio.

In radio, there was no need for anybody's introduction. It just happened, happened naturally and wonderfully. Ted Haring, who'd come down from Boston a couple of years earlier to make his mark at CHB, the Columbia Broadcasting System, was a regular club barker, a regular at Baby's top spot. He followed Duke's program week more than ordinary interest. This was his land. He was for it and he was going to do everything possible for it. He did. He gave the band its big radio break when it moved to the Casino Club a year later. In the meantime, he talked it up big and with the aid of small station broadcasts on WJZN, WJKA, managed to get some network slots for them out of the Kentucky Club.

The Kentucky Club tag was good enough, well enough known, so that on the arrival of records Duke and the boys made for Columbia and its cheaper label, Vocalion, then full of cash, the label read "Duke Ellington and His Kentucky Club Orchestra." There'd been just enough broadcasts to get the name around and make the association of club and band a glamorous one.

The band made one Columbia record, *East St. Louis Toodle-Do*, as there, and *Maple Rind*, then made another side

for that label, *Down in Your Alley Blues*, before moving to the Vocalion label. On Vocalion, they made *East St. Louis* again, *Birmingham Breakdown* and half a dozen sides not as well known. *East St. Louis* is the best-known Rubber Baby piece, a profound expression into the technical sounds of the rubber plunger now muted incept, with added atmosphere lent by the heavy bass figure, played by Casey on baritone. Wellman found purely subtle, hovering on strong bass, and low trombone notes from Tricky Sam. The *Breakdown* is a negligible romp, not comparable in importance to the *Toodle-Do*, which has hardly dated after eighteen years, but it does afford the opportunity to hear Duke's "jumpy" piano as it sounded in those days, and earlier, ramping through the sturdy melodic phrases, with brief solos followed by Otto Hardwick on alto, Rubber on trumpet and Casey on baritone. This record is important for many reasons. It is the earliest Ellington record still available today (in the Decca Brunswick edition of *Ellingtonia*, Volume 1). Both pieces stayed in the Ellington repertory until fifteen years later, when *Take the A Train* replaced the first as Duke's theme and the second was directly and pathetically dated.

After the Columbia-Vocalion days, the needs, interests and efforts of the record companies in New York were by no means limited. From other companies, Melrose, Ocala, Cameo, came offers to do record sessions. The money was too good; it couldn't be turned down. But, on the other hand, there were contractual obligations to Columbia. There were ready overtures for Melrose, Duke used the semi-de-dance of George Spacapan and Earl Jackson and the Harrier Choppers, for Ocala he led the Whoopee Making on another label, the band became the Lambropeks.

It was on Melrose that the most famous of all of Duke's early performances was first recorded and released. *The Black and Tan Fantasy*, which Rubber Baby did with Ellington's assistance, upon which Rubber and Tricky play so compellingly in their plunger style and which ends with the magnificently exposed introduction of the *Funeral March* from Chopin's *Il Trovatore* Sonata, Opus 15. When the band was shifted by Columbia to its

Clash label, it made no less widely released version of the number. Two different masters of this performance reached Ray and France, both were released almost with the archives credited to Louis Armstrong and His Washboard Roster. This extraordinary confusion has caused extraordinary movements were among jazz musicians and collectors because of the patent situation on the record of of Louis Armstrong, who never grewed as a trumpet in his life. By Washboard Roster, whose risk while delivery has never been combined with the beautiful sounds of either Louis's horn or the Ellington band.

Just before the band left the Kentucky Club for good, Victor, biggest by far of the record companies, made a good offer to Duke and Mills which they accepted. On October 21, 1931, the Ellington Orchestra made its first date for Victor. Later after *Creole Love Call*, *Black and Tan Fantasy* (jazzing), *The Blues I Love to Sing* and *Washington Whirls*. On the first and third, Adelaide Hall made her first appearance. Her lyric soprano whistles and harmonies and phrasal calls served subsequently on several Ellington records as vocal obbligato for mainstream solos, in a most useful spoken type. In those days, Paul Whiteman was the only leader who carried singers with him apart from accompanists who might take an occasional vocal. Other bands used only doubling instrumentalists (Orke used Sonny Greer) and hired guests to sing with them on records. At night clubs the vocals were usually taken by the show' men, the Duke Sisters or Charles King or John Barlow, or, in later years, by the singing bandleaders, Stephy Hall, Rudy Vallee, Will Osborne, and so on.

Duke, of course, had never heard a Creole Love Call, or any thing like it, in the Louisiana country where you might hear Creoles in love call on each other, till never from South. But the title seemed to fit the soft, lay mood of the music. *Black and Tan* is much like the earlier versions, of which the very first can be compared with this one, since both are well liked in the catalogue and continuously pressed. On the Victor record the chief advantage is better recording and more relaxed growling by the Messrs. Wiley and Nannan.

The record sessions were MEW's greatest achievement for Duke. They put Ellington within reach of everybody with a phonograph. Records became Duke's greatest means of expression, the medium in which his being was always at its best. He was one of the very first jazz bandleaders to take advantage of phonograph records, and he very soon became the object of getting a balance of microphones and providing a setting or arrangement which was most effective for the presentation of jazz instruments. From the very beginning, the Ellington musicians "knocked themselves out" in the record studios. They were well aware that this was their commitment to posterity, the only permanent reproduction of their music, since notation could not possibly duplicate the sounds they made. Irving Mills was pleased in the financial results of Duke's first records. He knew that they would open the way for bookings of greater prestige and less mere money. He was also aware of the musical contribution he had helped to make.

CHAPTER SIX

COTTON CLUB STOMP

MUSicians AND EARLY JAZZ AUDIENCES ARE A GOOD DEAL king of more ordinary nightclub joints had come down to the Kentucky Club in numbers and stayed and spent and fell in love Duke. They had even braved the swarming turpitude of the early summer of '35, one of the worst ever in a city infamous for its rotting July heat, to sit in the cellar at Apple and Broadway, where there was nothing even resembling air-conditioning, to hear the Ellington band. Song pluggers and music publishers had followed Irving Miller's lead in the '30s. It was very flattering, but it wasn't equally rewarding financially. That was important. It was even more important that there was a clear light to the rear of the band and the scope of the music one could hear at the Kentucky. It was like no other.

Out of the Kentucky the band went in the fall of 1937. It played some one-nighters and some tours. It was in a theater in Philadelphia in late November that Duke received word that Mills had signed a contract for the Cotton Club. The band was to open with the new show on December 4. King Oliver had been offered the spot first and had turned it down. Not enough money. Money was no obstacle to Duke, who wanted good bookings more than gold, but his contract with the Philadelphia theater was. It was no, to go another week, one week beyond the Cotton Club opening. Jimmy McHugh, the songwriter who had written the score for the show, who had persuaded the owners of the Club (a newspaper-owning champagne Jack Johnson among them) to have the Duke when the King said no, was terribly saddened

by this new difficulty. Can't you do something, he asked the publisher who ran the Club. They could.

A tiny paid friend, undersea friend of the Cotton Club syndicate—was a well-known Philadelphia purveyor. He was one of his boys over to see the chance again, the boy didn't say very much. He covered the facts of the situation briefly, then summed up.

"Be big," the boy suggested. "Be big," he pleaded, "or you'll be dead." The theater man was big.

The band arrived in New York the very day of the Cotton Club opening, having rehearsed the new show as best it could in Philly. In New York, there were some heavy rain storms with the dancers and singers and a quick return to the band members' several houses to finish up for the opening.

Openings in 1937 were like openings today. Nobody knew the music, cars were stalled, expected high again fell through, and half-suspected lines and songs and dances turned into air sessions. The main point was that the audience and groups were new, the band was being introduced to the big time, the score was intricate, the people were receptive.

The band were into the Cotton Club with a limited understanding of the big-time show world. Duke was not a leader in the sense that Paul Whiteman or Ted Lewis or Vincent Lopez was, at his best or at the piano. He wasn't that kind of showman. He wasn't a first-calling Master of Ceremonies as a slick hotel maven, he didn't wear a tattered hat or band of playing more notes per minute than any other pianist. Nobody in the band was funny like a clown. The music had to speak for itself.

Before the Ellington band went into the Cotton Club, the band there had been the Mintoners. Not a great name, it is chiefly remembered today as the organization Cabell Calloway took over when he got forever the church singing of his youth and of his father's mature years, dropped the "all" from his Christian name and made "Hildaka" almost as much of a household phrase as "Oh, yeah!" and "Yes, yes!" Not great or not, most of the Mintoners had played in and around Cle-

cups or came from there, and most of the waitresses in the Cotton Club came from there, too. The barboys, the waiters, the cooks, the various workers for the orchestra, the hangmen came from Chicago. The Cotton Club at 143rd and Lenox in New York's Harlem might just as well have been located at 47th and South Parkway in Chicago's South Side. This was a Chicago spot and Chicagoans alone were welcome to work there. When word came that King Oliver was coming in, the Cotton Club crowd was pleased. Joe Oliver said his boys were just finishing up better than the press in the Windy City and were practically masters of the place. They were welcome. But when the Cotton Club crowd learned that Duke Ellington and the Washingtonians, most recently of the Kentucky Club in New York, Charlesworth Ballroom in Salem and elsewhere at points just briefly north, south, east but hardly west of that spot, were next, they were annoyed. Washingtonians they wanted. Ellington? Right The band found little co-operation at the Cotton Club. It ran into whispered conversations about their supposed laziness and the ridiculousness of looking them into the place, about their unadmitted failure and why had anyone bothered about them, anyway?

Well, Jimmy McHugh had bothered about them because he was a smart competitor and a keen observer of the value of dance bands. It was his score that was going to be hammered or called by the band at the CC, and he was determined to get what he considered the best. His sponsorship of Ellington was not the first time a musician had spoken up for one talent over the last. The first connects the Washingtonians had made in New York went with musicians options, and musicians never had rights of the band. It was in some part due to the loyalty of these people, the instincts of jazz, that Ellington came through so quickly and so impressively once the opportunities were made for him and his colleagues. Whiteman talked the band up, followed every thing it did, bought its records religiously. They've never lost their interest and never ceased to be a source of inspiration to the band. Word went around Harlem that Duke was speaking at the Cotton Club and the musicians stepped up. There wasn't

much they could do there was a pretty strict color line at the Cotton Club. A very prominent colored musician or sportsman or businessman could get a back table somewhere, but, in general, the people of Harlem were conspicuous by their absence from Harlem's number one night club. Although fellow musicians couldn't give the band support in the form of an enthusiastic claque, they could talk about the opening up and down the spoken bass for days and weeks to come and make the band the subject of just enough conversation so the talk would get downword. And downword, the white musicians could pick it up, come upon it later for themselves and start talking up Ellington themselves. And before very long in the manner of jazz lay tales, there could be more and more requests to make records, requests to double as chosen in and around New York, publicity wherever jazz rained in the colored press and a good deal in the white. There could be these things there were.

Ellington, Hardwick, Green, Guy, Milky, Norton, the originalists, formed the real core of the band, its musical and social force. Rudy Jackson and Louis Stewart on tenor sax and trumpet, respectively, and William S. Ford, the bass man, were additions of some consequence only in that they added to the band's working personnel. But Harry Carney was in from the first note he played with the band. Bashed to harness, his mastery of the lower register horn was obvious from the start and his personality, then of a more young kid, was a natural for this organization.

The transition from a seven-piece band to a ten, from a house-keeping little outfit which was on its dignity only in the recording studio to one which was required to look stand, play show music, appear dignified all the time, was made without any noticeable difficulties. The change was made without any formal ceremony, and nobody, except Duke, perhaps, was especially aware of it. But change it was, the irrefutable growth from music for its own sake to music for the big business, from looking out's own job to looking through Irving Mills, from some place to ten, eleven, twelve and fifteen, from wildcat recording

for a dance company under a many pseudonyms in a contract with Victor, then with Brunswick, from appearances in his spots on their own station for the kids of playing to paid jam sessions and very briefly.

First evidence of the change, apart from the increased attention in the real and loose sections, was the remarkable difference in the attitude of the GGG, the Cotton Club Orchestra. They soon became the greatest of Ellington fans, their fiercest supporters.

"And so all the time," they said,

"Know it," they said, "and so he, Duke's hand I ever heard."

"The best," they said, "that's it!"

In the manner and mode of speaking of one of Harlem's best known "quints," they chorused, "Love it!"

The big music in that first Cotton Club show, which Duke opened on December 4, 1937, were *Discretion* and *Jazzmania*. They were Jimmy McHugh's, of course, not Ellington's. Duke and his men were not composers of any standing then, and who had ever heard of a headliner writing the show for a leading night-club revival just out from *Discretion* and *Jazzmania*, the titles, are typical of the attitude of the day toward popular music, popular dancing and jazz. Music, madhouse people who danced like that had learned to mean like that were psychotic, troubled in mind and likely to go further, possibly blow their brains out (so 4/4 time, of course, with the drums beating madly, the horns screeching madly, the trumpets screaming madly). The difference between the attitude of the dignitaries of jazz in those distant days of late evening parties, who called jazz a decoy for pseudo delinquency, is very great. Then, it was madness and madness was the thing, the fashion. Later, it was regarded as an indication of wisdom and it had to go. Of course, neither its madness in the early years nor the beckoning finger to whatever delinquency later, cost any more of its participation in the human system and jolt than any other profession.

Paul Rosenfield, looking some of the 1920's and early thirties,

summed up the first years and jazz at just very well in his book, *Jim Mower and the Harlem Music* (J. B. Lippincott, 1939):

American music is not jazz. Jazz is not music. Jazz requires a certain intelligence product, a well-developed technique, an outgrowth of other musical developments. What we call music, however, is a form, adjusted to the needs of the world in which materials flow and elements play, and never like them upon the human situation, and hold and determine as it is, subjective with material in other words and fuller of belief than a hypothesis, our characteristic "discretion" is chiefly question....

... The typical jazz composition offers more love, psychical services, displacement, confirmation to pre-established patterns, the dimensions of love of show and love and the color the so-called jazz polyphony, in their verbal content and change. The chief adjustment is it proceeds from a mood of pride, exultant consciousness and maintenance of the abstract, logical, including love.... We have here to do with an extraordinarily popular drug-like use of the materials of mind.... It is a smart, superficially alert, good-humored, and cynical. Essentially, established, it is just another means of escape....

You might ask, first of all, what jazz is an escape from. Rosenfield makes that clear, in a muddy sort of way. It is an escape from "reality," from "an acceptance of the conditions of existence, of inevitable tragedy and misfortune, of adherence to the powerful and the few public." This is an extraordinarily selfish presumption on Rosenfield's part which others have made since. The jazz musician finds no place in these limited metaphysics. The jazz musician remains a spiritual creature: the abandonment of a narcotic. However "alert, good-humored" he may be, he is also "opiate," too "well-balanced" in his mind as product "a force adjusted to the needs of the world in which materials flow and elements play."

How could the jazz musician be anything but cynical in a world which treats him with such arbitrary, poisoning, unknown presumption? Those questions to make judgments about jazz have always been outsiders, men who have neither lived with jazz nor loved it, who never appreciated its terms, never

needed for its rich new people and theology. From the very beginning, the Ellington band spoke about "the conditions of existence," though not necessarily with acceptance, and knew more "of inevitable tragedy and extinction" than any of their "hopeful" contemporaries. They came from a world of unbridled racism such as Roosevelt and his successors never dreamed, in which the customs and mores and moral structure of white society were inseparably mixed with an entirely different set of values, based in part on institutions of pigmentation, in part on slave or free miscegenation, on considerations that a white man couldn't know or understand and didn't try to appreciate very often. From the very beginning, the music of the Ellington organization reflected the Negro's sense of tragedy, his own society and participation in others', his dramatic life, closer to "the stream of the world in which materials float and elements play" than the average white man's.

Consider the names of the early Ellington records, *Black and Tan Fantasy*, *What Can a Poor Fellow Do*, *Song of the Cotton Field*, *Crescent Love Call*, *Black Beauty* and *Jabber Jooey*. Duke and Budkin and the others were talking of their lives and their people, speaking with candor and uncontrolled anguish, with sadness and with gladness, with an acceptance of what they might call original sin or the weakness of color or simply the woe of God's world, and with a degree of anger which they rarely permitted expression. That anger had to make world-wide acceptance of the joy and the sorrow: there would be time enough then to look out at inequality and injustice, if ever such protest could mean anything.

It is not necessary to learn for the story in Duke's pieces, though most of them are based on sadness, songs of hope or joy or melancholy reflection. It is not necessary to search for the meaning of this music as an expression of Negroes, though it is surely that. This probing and inherent honesty are not necessary because, from its beginning, the Ellington band has spoken in universal terms as well as the particular, has made a universal appeal that had its reach out to listeners and dancers all over the world. Sometimes it was just a catchy little tune that caught

a listener's fancy and made happy whistling on the way to work. Sometimes, a four-four phrase struck with a sprightly syncopation that dancing to it was irresistible and surely captivating for two people in love. Sometimes, the grace of a particular groove, or the better known, the greater expression of sounds just about fit were, enough to fit the listener's mood and give new order to the day, making disorder in the everyday world stand fast. Always, there was something that Negroes especially could understand, some theme or development classical, some meaning or vision that caught with moving sadness and delicacy some feeling they had experienced, emotional states or involved moods or just the mixed pleasure and pain of their hopelessly jumbled world.

The form of Duke's music was loose in those days, looser than it is today, less imposed harmonically, not as driving rhythmically, the melodies not so rich either. But the characteristics which were there, the melody of growth, the looping saxophone sounds, the heavy beat. There was, from the very beginning, a brilliant contrast of soft, mellifluous sound and crunchy notes like a gravel-throated human yelling or laughing or crying.

Louis Armstrong's record, *Laughing Louis*, sold by the hundreds of thousands for OKeh, it was one of the biggest records of that or any other time. Jazzmen of the time were deeply interested in the virtuosity with which they could reproduce human sounds, and Louis's accompaniment to laughter was one of the most successful attempts in anti-symphonic music and phrases. In the same way, *Tricky Sam and Budkin Wiley* laughed and cried on their horns and gave human form and personality to their notes.

Benny Green had inherited an old tradition he'd brought up all the drum equipment he could find, snare and tom-toms and high-hats, even a couple of kettledrums. Surrounded by this veritable battery of kettledrums, barrels and cylinders, Benny could make all possible drum sounds; he could convince listeners they were hearing what Mink overdreamed, *Primitive Rhythms*. In a time when at least the sophisticated Ellington audience was convinced that Africa made almost unknown

posed beneath the tan skin of his muscled, shaggy Primitivistic Rhythms composed up true jungles, warrens on the forest floor, huts and tents and patches and their tribal customs among the humans.

When these machines went up to the Cotton Club and found "shades" dancers performing incredible gyrations and undulations of their naked bodies, bookkeeper Tucker testing his thigh joints and hamstrings as his arms suggested, like a lion contending at sunset, they were certain they were looking at the direct descendants of the jungle tribes. Ellington's music gave further evidence to this picture. Africa spoke as Harlem in the late twenties.

When Ellington got to Harlem in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan, he capitalized on this impression, not necessarily perhaps, but it was that which remained with his audience. He used a "horde," a transparent screen of gauze-like material, which obscured the band when it first appeared after the heavy outer curtains had been lifted. With soft blue lights giving the stage an eerie atmosphere and with the screen to reduce the figure of the man to shadow, the first impact of the band was that of a group of men from a world beyond. Duke, who liked to indulge in fantasies all the more about himself, his audience, his music, brought some of the dream to bear like on the stage of nothing more fully than in New York. It all added to his appeal.

Money was pouring in from theaters, special midnight, ball-room appearances and records, more money than the Washington had ever seen before. The band shifted to the OKeh label and made its recordings, its good old routine numbers, again. This time, Earl Mc Louis Double-Os was called Modern Times, to avoid confusion and competition with the Victor and Columbia versions. *Tell It Easy* too rhymed to the later movie run of the same name and *Jubilee Stamp* went back. There, in their first records for Brunswick, the Ellington machines recorded that past again and the Yellow Dog and Pickaninny Blues, in which the musicians of W. G. Healy's and Spencer Williams' titles was easily matched by the strange sounds made

by Bubber and Tricky Sam. On the first three sides for OKeh a new character was heard. Barney Bigard had joined the band. On the last two there was a new addition the little Boston boy in short pants, though no taller, had donned his leopards and came to New York, Johnny Hodges was in. Before very long he had a new nickname, even at every other Ellington musician. "Rabbit" they called him—because he looked like one.

Barney was an addition to the bald headed row, not as close as kip in Ohio Hardwick, but a well-cut young man of twenty-one with sufficiently thin lips to fit his well-turned look and nose down, to round out a figure that looked like a prosperous lawyer's. Barney was from New Orleans, his personal associations were Creole, his skin was white. His past associations were New Orleans: his name was big and round, he played the Albert clarinet, which had greater space to cover than the tenor, under Bubber's clarinet. He'd played with the Tim and with Omerie Gaspard in the Crescent City and had made enough of a reputation down there to get a call from King Oliver in 1923. He replaced Johnny Dodds with Lang Joe, made records with Jelly Roll Morton as well as with Oliver and built a fine reputation as a clarinetist of liquid tone and fluent technique. Just before coming with Ellington, he had passed a year with Louis Russell's band of New Orleans strings. You can hear the ideas he had upon the sound of the band on his responsive entrance and his oblique back of Tricky in Pickaninny. Barney was far more than a replacement for Bubber because he was an addition of real sound, of the kind that which long-staying Ellington cannot counter or later obliterate.

Johnny, like Harry Carey, came in as a substitute for Oss Hardwick. Like Harry, too, he came to stay for a while and remained permanent possessor of his chair. Oss was out this time for more than a while while. He wandered off to various places to have him come fan and was gone three years. Atlantic City, Paris and back to New York.

In Atlantic City, Oss got himself a new name, Toby. Toby followed naturally enough from the last syllable of his Christian name. From 1924 on, it was Toby Hardwick.

In Paris, Teddy got himself new kicks. He most stayed on the S. S. Hamburg with a musician's ticket and seven cents, all that was left after buying the ticket. But Teddy was a friendly guy, a good musician and a remarkable drinker, he was all right and drank all night and lived all night on the S.S. Hamburg. When he arrived in Paris, he made quick contacts. First there was Bucking, the same Duke Smith from Washington who had scored the Washingtonians their first big job in New York at Rainer's. Bucking was a reigning table-top belle in Paris. Her club, Bucking's, at 32 Rue Pigalle, was one of Manhattan's most successful, handsome red and blue beretle proclaimed in English the virtues of her establishment:

at
BUCKING'S
je suis parisien

one can
drink what you want
eat the best of food
dance to good music
hear your favorite songs

open all night American bar

For a few months, Teddy helped produce the good music for the good buffet. Then he moved over to Les Ambassadeurs, a much larger spot than Bucking's, a theater-restaurant where Noble Sissle, who'd made his reputation as co-leader of the Hayderson, Shuffle Along, and composer of the song *I'm Just Wild about Harry*, had the *Odeonette de Jazz*. Teddy played with Sissle another two months and then left for New York, having hailed from one end of Paris to the other, learned the hot points of all the world's happenings, met a fascinating variety of people and been accepted without racial restrictions and personal prejudices as the first-rate musician and barker being he is.

Back in New York, 'Teddy got himself a new reputation. He became a bandleader, not on the piping fute on which he'd earned some of his first money in Washington, but as a full-time horn man for a full-time band. His music finally landed a first-

rate engagement at the Hot Feet Club, 142 West Houston Street, the pride of Greenwich Village. Its name recalled the club across the street from Bricktop's, Le "Hot Feet," where Teddy had played heady work in *colored artists' parlors*, *Nadia Blue*, *of an orchestra*, which was also named after he was. The personnel of Teddy's band encompassed some of the great names still to come. Pat Walker was on piano, Gus Berry was an actor-musician, Wayman Carter, who could never get over his early classical training, doubled most impressively from alto to horn first, as he later did with Chuck Webb, Gervin Burkett was the other alto and Theodore McCoy was on baritone. With Teddy up front on alto, too, the band had a four-man lead section in a day when sax quartets were still rare. It jumped like mad, played tricky arrangements and featured as fine a range of solos as could be heard in New York. The club did well with Teddy's band (he was still billed as Otto Hardwick), four girls and four singing waiters. Tips were so big that when they were divided each night among the thirteen musicians, girls and waiters they yielded \$20 to the apiece. Teddy had to leave for the guys each week to give them their \$33 paycheck. All was well, the jazz was "bull, man" until the end of 1931. Things had been going so well that the owner of Houston Street's Hot Feet went to Chicago to start a smaller club there. But he returned without Chicago's territorial definition had divided in the carefully organized city of Chicago there was no nightclub territory available to men from New York. The man from New York arrived in Chicago early one week and knew this same week departed the north. He could have seen of Chicago, the Chicago gangs would have none of him. Teddy's career as a bandleader was over.

Before Teddy quit as a bandleader, however, he had the misfortune of knowing he had "cut" Duke, one of the few bands if not the only one, ever to beat Ellington in a battle of music, official or unofficial. Both bands were playing a benefit at the Royal Astor for one of the New York columnists who ran such affairs every week. Duke's band was bigger, and better, than it had been when Teddy left in '28. That was three years later and

there were three fragments making, Carney, Barney and Johnny. Duke had three fragments (Whore!, Mule! and Mourn!) Toke had no fragments. Duke had Tenby Sam; Toke had no fragments. Toke was one rhythm man short; no tempo. But Duke's drummer doubled on vibas, he had five voices (Kiss Jerry, Wayman Carver, McCoy, Bushell and himself) and he had Fats Waller.

Both bands blew everything they had in the books. The Ellington organization showed off its plethora of brass. Toke rattled with sibs, played saxophone smooth, while making in the woods, and a heap of changing notes by Oba, Carver and Toke, and Fats. After the evening was over, Carney came over to Toke.

"How are you, fellow?" he asked Toke.

"How's my man?"

"Good."

Silence.

"You know, Toke, you run in all that night?"

"No kidding?"

"No kidding?"

In later years, almost everybody in that band was ready to admit that that had been Toke Handbuck's night. The seven-day trip to Europe had produced great results. A brilliantly equipped seven-piece band had come back a full-sized leader. Bus notes and gang talking being what they were, Toke decided to go back to being a sideman. He wound up at Sam's, Louis and 115th, late in 1935. Jerry Rice, childhood friend of Duke's, later private secretary, comedian, good friend, gone upon, anything and everything he could be, ran into Sam's to "catch" Toke. He saw lots of other musicians of the period, it was their hangout. Claude Jones and John Natch from McKinney's Cotton Picking. Doc Robinson, who ran McKinney's band for Mrs. Fletcher Henderson and her of his boys, Benny Carter, Coleman Hawkins, Chick Webb and Bobby Stark, Jimmy Harrison, Ray Stewart, who'd just joined McKinney.

"Hey, Rex," Jerry called.

"How are you, man?" Rex returned. "Ain't seen you in years."

"How, Daddy, son." They smiled and exchanged backslaps. Jerry continued on his way.

"Where's Toke Handbuck?" he asked one of the brothers.

"At the bar, Papa," the brother answered.

Jerry found Toke at the bar.

"Toke?" he asked.

"Eh, damn it," Toke answered, and one of his face-covering scarves followed, slow but complete.

"It's me, old right, you old bastard," Jerry admitted. "What you been doing. Daddy-of-Never mind, don't tell me, I know."

But Toke did tell him and they exchanged reminiscences, the one of Atlantic City and Paris, the two Hot Feet Clubs and looking.

"How's old Add?" Jerry inquired.

"Great. What position she there? I can't tell you," that he did. The other told of Hodges and Bepko, of the four brown-men, of Louis Blum's impression.

"He seems to be a man," Jerry told Toke.

"And why not, everybody wants to be a man, why not Marcell? Toke, who always sympathized with the underdog, replied.

"Because he just isn't," Jerry explained.

"Well, I am," Toke asserted.

"But you are."

"And I play where I am recognized, if only as a great dancer."

"And where were you better recognized than with Duke?" Jerry asked.

"How's old Duke?"

"Great. But he misses you."

"The hell he does," Toke said.

"Certainly does. Always has, Great."

Brief pause for drink identification. Toke downed his rum. Jerry took a long sip of his double Bourbon.

"Do you remember the Cupid?" Jerry asked.

"Kisses all?"

"The Miller brothers?"

"All that we meant"

"And the happy boys?"

"And my father?"

"And my father?"

"And Debs?"

"And Debs!" Jerry emphasized the name of their boyhood friend.

"Wait'll you see all the dances Sonny has taught."

"Son, 'em," Toby acknowledged.

"I know you have. When you coming back, Toby?"

"Soon. Very soon. Don't worry."

Toby rejoined the hotel early in 1919. He'd been gone well over three years. He found a very different world from the one he had left, one that was never like the old days, one in which there was a clear distinction between the leaders and the men on the band. He had a lot to learn.

CHAPTER SEVEN

REMINISCING IN TEMPO

They sat down with some of the boys, Sonny, Harry, Sonny. They were talking their ease between one night in May, 1921. They knew it would be some time before they could again stretch their legs, with equanimity, on the ground and pulled by a bunching team. Even with side trips to the Midwest and Southwest to play houses and theaters, full weeks, split weeks and moonlighting, the dominant impression would be of waiting in a town. They'd see more of miles than of any other country. Talk and drink, then, was the order of the day.

"What's happened?" Toby asked of no one in particular.

"While you were gone?" Sonny asked Toby.

"While I was gone," Toby answered.

"That's a big order," Sonny laughed.

"Can do," Sonny interrupted.

"Well, then?" Toby asked.

"Everything," Sonny answered, "everything. From every where and over everything." He suddenly remembered Toby had been in Paris, been further, been more, maybe, than he and the other members of the Ellington band. "Well, maybe not everywhere, but over everything so be soon where we were."

"I know you have, Elmer," Toby encouraged.

"Tell you, son, there was, first of all, and last of all, the Cotton Club. We've seen so much of the Cotton Club we want a part of the wall decoration. Played there every year since '17 and expect we'll play there till we die."

"Well, I hope so," Toby said.

"What's the matter with the Cotton Club?" Sonny asked.

"Don't never him," Carney continued. "He knows as well as you who's the man with the Cotton Club. It's a right club and it shows off Willie Tucker and the line of girls very well. It's made a reputation for us, but I'd like to hear on someplace where you could hear us. Let alone. Make money."

"You're right," Sonny admitted. "right as Helltown." Willie once took me Sonny's wife, a dancer at the Cotton Club, whom he married when she had went into the spot.

"Well, keep telling, more news," Toby said.

"Cash that party too," Sonny said, smiling at Carney.

"Indeed, indeed," Carney acknowledged.

Sonny got on with the story.

"First of all, there was the Father. You remember before you left, Toby, they were talking about the band for a Father. Well, we didn't get to play the Father, but we did get into a Bagfield show. How Gaf it was. Gerdman came. Working spread about it what, except one time, Lee."

"What did the band do? Something of your own?"

"No Ellington. We did Gerdman, The crabs, some of them, others, concentrated on the individuals, Ellington playing Gerdman, not Ellington. But it wasn't so bad."

"What'd you do?"

"Concerto in F, some of it. Bruck played the piano part."

"They were really talking Concerto in F and Ellington in Blue and Gerdman, where I was in Paris," Toby volunteered. "They made the Ellington into a ballet and they were playing it at all the symphony concerts. And the Concerto was done at the Paris Opera. Gerdman is a big name in Europe. He was once in all when I was and you should have seen the crowd of people devoted to him. Sure is a white haired boy in Europe. George is." Toby thought a moment. "So are we."

"Well, Carney and Sonny chorused.

"Ellington and all. They talk about the band. Some of the records had just got over. By now, it ought to be big talk, with about Duke and Tricky and Bubber and all."

"Oh, yeah, Bubber," Sonny said, kind of slowly. "He died. You know that?"

"I did. What happened?"

"Just kicked over and died. Left us in '29, January, I think, shortly after you did. He hung out with a lot of different musicians, made some records with various people. Jelly Roll Morton, I think. Then he made a deal himself. Bubber Wiley and his Ellington Makers. He made about a half-dozen sides for Victor. Let's see, I should remember the titles. Well, I remember two of 'em anyway, because they were such good titles, *Black Morn* and *Candle* and *Chatter*."

"James Wiley was a character and a shatterer," Toby commented.

"He was he was," Carney agreed. "Good thing he was with us as long. Gave us something. And fortunately, before he left the band, we made that *Black* and *Tan* record short."

"Now it," Toby said. "Very good, too."

"Was some kind of prize," Sonny said, reaching out his chest as if he were the prize-winning film.

"Yes, a bit," Carney extended. "And it deserved it, I think. The soft light, the slow close-ups, even slower dissolves. That's good movie-making. And good *Black* and *Tan*. Ever see Duke look better, Toby?"

"Never. Never did see a better sight. But it was good and well. Really like a winner."

"Hope RKO wants to make some more," Sonny said.

"Hope they want to make some more big money," Sonny said.

"You mean Anne 'n' Andy's *Clack* and *Double Clack*?" Carney asked.

"Oh, I do. Sorry you missed that, Toby."

"Understand you drove around Hollywood in a hundred-ton old machine," Toby said.

"Yeah, yeah. See Tinseltown Company Incorporated. We became characters. Summer, 1930. I won't forget it."

"What record?" Toby commented. "Couple of sides put on Madison and win popularity for Negroes, give Negroes jobs. What record?"

"Hollywood was fun, ain't that," Sonny went on. "Fun." He

took a couple of drinks and returned. "We went out to that Cotton Club, Schenetta. Very different from this one. Its right near the MGM too, it's big as hell and filled with people."

"Lead around it is fancy, too," Carney commented. "Looks like a Western movie. Dirty streets. Wide open bars. Cowboys wandering in and out of 'em, real and fake ones, from the movies."

"Cotton City." Barney identified the site of Schenetta's Cotton Club.

"Remember Eddie Anderson was there?" Barney asked the assembled musicians, speaking of the comedian who adopted the name of Schenetta when he joined Jack Benny's radio program some years later.

"They looked. 'Dancing pretty well. Got some money jobs.'"

"Part of a pretty good song and dance team," Barney admitted.

"The whole show was good," Barney said. "We had fun on the Coast. Heard some good music, too. That Elvin had ain't had. Good musicians. Good dancers, a kid named Lionel Hampton. Love took over the band when he got out there."

"The music was a good deal, too," Barney commented. "One good song, 'These Little Words,' and we got a big break in the lounge. Almost could tell us from *Amos 'n' Andy*."

And then they commenced some more. About their first session at the Lincoln Gardens Club in Evanston, north Chicago. About the inspiring scene of proprietress in the big room and the wide open South Side, the colored section, where you could drink almost as much as in the old days, before Prohibition. Though you might find that one of Big Jim Colosimo's boys had spilled blood on the front steps of the place at which you were drinking, or Al Capone's private secretary might have plugged a few holes in the ceiling over the bar at which you were scotchily downing a healthy gulp of bourbon, the main point was you could drink in Chicago, the "chicks" were slick and friendly, the town was good.

Toby told them about the old bar in that same good town of the kindly man who ran Huxman Street's Hot Feet and they

all shook their heads in friendly understanding and extended great sympathy to the honored co-bandleader. "But we're actually glad to know you had, ole man," they assured him.

They compared notes on the new guys, talking over the respective merits of Freddy Jackson and Goodie Williams, the two new trombones, and of Johnny Hodges, who got all the air time.

"You know Freddy's left handed," Carney pointed out.

"Funniest thing I ever saw," Toby said. "Particularly when the trombone stand up and you see the difference in handling the instrument, so lagging the valves."

"Focus men in the whole business, too," Barney said, in mock anger, a smile crossing his face as he thought of the cocky little man who sat at the end of the lounge seat.

"Remember him and Babber?" Barney asked. "How they used to fight?" He explained. "Babber couldn't stand seeing Freddy pass when he took a solo. He was himself, you know, shows his hand back, always shows down from. Well, Babber told Freddy to stop posing so much. 'Get it,' he said. 'Before this a grown up hard man.' He was boss of the section, so he could tell Freddy. Well, Jackson didn't cut the posing. So Babber moved him from the middle to the end, where he thought you wouldn't see Freddy so well. Freddy showed better a star, he thought up some ways of being seen. Which has been these hand symbols. What's next?"

"I like his playing," Toby commented. "Especially his soft muted stuff. Freddy?"

"Talking about Percy's hand symbols," Carney asked, "how 'bout Toot's cornered?"

"How 'bout them?"

"Well, we're a Latin band now. Nothing we can't do. Remember, unique. You name it. We play it. Toot's the boy. A real Latin. Comes from Puerto Rico. A very tough boy, a very queer boy. But seriously, he takes some good stuff and he handles that valve trouble like a symphony man."

"Well, I remember Toot," Toby said. "We played in the pit at the Howard. Played with you, Barney, didn't he?"

"Sure. And he was leading down marches and dances and things then, too. That was a big P.K. delegation in that lot and they all played a little bit good on the side."

"What about Coote?" Tobey asked.

They told him about Coote. Told him how Charles McRae had come to New York in '44 with the Alamo Room band from his native South. Told him that Coote Williams was actually an Alabama boy, Mobile, to be exact. hadn't lost his Southern accent and didn't give signs of being it. Had played a little dance as a boy, liked musical at school bands and inclined to trumpet while in high school. He'd played in Florida and other Southern states and was thrilled to death to get New York with them. But New York has New York. The weather was as damn freezing, after the South, that half the band came down with very bad colds, flu or worse sick. That left only a seven piece band. The band spread at the Brooklyn Roadhouse Ballroom with only seven pieces, though leaders had been hired. That same night the Alamo Room band received an two-week notice from the Roadhouse boss.

The lady at whose house the Roadhouse men were staying in Brooklyn wanted the rest. They kept promising her, she kept saying them. Finally, when Coote couldn't stand the routine of nagging and promising, he ran down to his father in Mobile for 150, paid back rent and distributed the rest among the fellows in the band, those with colds and those without. That didn't leave very much for any of them, but these Southern boys were used to a different, proletarian life as musicians. They found a bakery at Cumberland and Fulton where they could get their breakfast for a nickel, their dinner for a dime. Breakfast: seven rolls and coffee. Dinner: a bowl of soup and a roll. Coote tried to stick with the band, but soon there was nothing to stick with. A fly-by-night manager got them a week's work, ran out on Fulton Street, then ran away with the week's pay. Coote and a couple of the other Roadhouse boys heard it and he was coaching home and, hungry pays that they were, didn't hesitate to use strong methods of persuasion; they got every cent he had left of their pay, but he had already spent a lot of it.

Edmond Hall had come up from New Orleans with the Roadhouse band and he and Coote used to cross the bridge near Marston way to attend the jazz sessions upstairs. The Roadhouse was the place to go and Ed Hall introduced his Albert-sons, beginning on his trumpet. Coote has kept trumpet since, as sessions there. Everybody used to come to the Marston's. It was a Harlem sort, if you were a passing musician. In a few weeks, Coote heard them all: Fats, J. P. and the Duke with counting glasses out of the piano keyboard, Fletcher Henderson's men, Benny Carter, Coleman Hawkins, Rex Brown, Jimmy Harrison, all blowing like inspired madmen.

One "trumpet night," when only practitioners of that instrument jammed at the Roadhouse, Coote was hired by Clark White. Clark was a very little bantamweight from Baltimore, one of the great drummers and bandleaders of his time. It was from him Coote knew that Johnny Hodges had come to Ellington earlier that same year, 1944. Lots of brilliant pianists had played with him, were still to play with him, for Clark had a list out, picked his men with great accuracy and from his high drum seat drove them to jazz heights. Clark heard Coote, that was enough.

"Get your trunk," Clark told Coote, after he had heard his story, "get your trunk and come live with me!"

Coote was the talk of New York after that trumpet night at the Roadhouse, but Clark wasn't working and there was nothing he could do about taking advantage of the powerful young trumpeter's reputation. Clark took Coote into his room, but he was so far broke himself, he had to go around with his new roommate to his mother's and get \$5 or 10 for each of them from her. With almost all the spare beds and halves, the two boys would go to Ruffin on Luxon Avenue. Ruffin specialized in Southern dances. Mainstay jazz, from jazz and over, the best Coote was used to. All very thrilling to a Southerner and to a musician. Mainstay was as handy as they drank and played in the 1920's, still do.

Finally, Clark landed another stretch at the Swope Ballroom. Harlem's premier danceery. Coote played with him for three weeks, until the musician union delegate walked in.

"Think, you should know better," the union delegate told Webb. "You know he can't work with you with a Mohle card. Get him out of there."

Chick spoke back to the delegate, Milton, who later opened one of Harlem's leading jazzmen spots and racing places. Jimmy Harrison, the trombonist, Rabbit Smith, the trumpeter, and the other guys in the band tried to reason Chick, the little man was all for having Milton there and there. Milton told him to get the hell over to the union on the following Tuesday Trial hour.

Chick showed up at the trial hour and as he'd been the previous week when Carter had been plucked from his band. He told them all off, told them he would not respond to demands placed on his band, it was his band after all. The trial hour members, like almost every musician in New York, had tremendous affection for the little man before, the more his lips cracked and uncracked, the more his hands failed in the air, the more their indignation and displeasure increased. When Chick turned to Milton and told him, "I want to see you as soon as we get out of here," they laughed and told Chick to "git".

For all his leave words, Chick knew the union rules. You couldn't play with a New York band unless you had a New York union card. He didn't put Carter back on the stand at the Avery. But he wouldn't let Cooke work with anyone else either, with traveling bands (from Local Ten, even New York bands) with whom he could have worked. He gave the trumpeter money and stubbornly kept him home safe. He never let Cooke answer the phone, made sure that he wouldn't accept another offer as a work answer.

But one day Chick had to go out. And that day Fletcher Henderson got into town. He'd heard of Cooke and was interested in getting him to replace Russell Smith, longtime first man in Henderson's house section. "Smack" (Fletcher) called Cooke Cooke assumed.

"Where you at?" Cooke asked Fletcher.

"Can wait at 1345 Street, Big John's," Smack answered. It

was the place after which the Henderson brothers, Fletcher and Horace, named their famous Big John Special.

Cooke played trumpet with Fletcher accompanying him in the back of Big John's place.

"You're on," Fletcher said in his quiet, unemphatic voice. "I'd like for you to go to Philly with me to play an engagement there."

Cooke went along for that engagement. He never had a rehearsal, not one, just ran the first hour right down and finished such tough musicians as Coleman Hawkins. Smack wanted him to stay, he liked the band well. But Cooke really wasn't interested in anyone but Chick, and when the band returned to New York after two weeks on the road, to open at the Rux band, he had no time. He just didn't show up. The band couldn't play without him. He was also known the whole first hour, all the lead (solo) trumpet parts. Smack called Cooke up at Chick's. Chick said no go. Smack, pretty honest now, told his brother Horace to run up to Chick: "and get Cooke, somewhere, anywhere." Horace, in his less permanent manner, talked long and logically and coldly to Chick. He reasoned him, and Chick told Cooke to go ahead.

"That was some band," Carney commented, after this long revival of Cooke's background. "Great music, all right, Hank, Earl, Benny Carter, Big Coons, Rex."

"Sure was," Cooke agreed. The big trumpeter with the very dark face and brilliantly white smile joined the discussion.

"You and Rex made quite a team," Carney said.

"That Rex really is a character," Cooke agreed. "Good trumpeter, better character. Did I ever tell you about the whiskey?" Stories of "No, no, go on." Cooke told them about the whiskey. "Well, Rex had a bottle, a big bottle of whiskey in his locker. And some of the rest of the guys consumed it. They nailed his locker when he was out of the room and when he returned he found his bottle was drained dry. Tapped it over and ran a drop left in it. Rex said nothing, told nobody he'd discovered the loss of his liquor. He replaced the bottle next night with another. Only this time, he mixed vodka or vodka

the whistle. The guys heard this band, too. Oh, what a time on the stand that night! Coste laughed, he laughed that low growl-like laugh, so much like his trumpet growl.

'You should have seen Coste laugh when he joined us in 'ag,' Sonny told Toby. 'He never stopped. Right on the stand, too.'

'What was so funny?' Toby asked Coste.

'I used to laugh at Tricky Sam, and Freddy Jenkins, who was doing the good stuff. Bubbers used to play. I thought it was very funny. See, I never played anything but open trumpet till I joined Duke as 'ag. But he liked me to replace Bubbers. So, after laughing a bit, I says to myself, this is what the man liked me to do. I'll do it. He never did show me, you know. He just said, 'Listen, put horns.' I turned and made some hands to compare for two months and finally reached the point where I didn't think it was funny.'

'How'd you compare the two bands—Snack's and Duke's?' Toby asked Coste.

'Well,' he answered, slowly, deliberately, 'Snack's always got a hot band. Maybe not hot. Band never released. Never a swing to it. Really it was an awful lot of hot music. Duke got a groove. That is my kind of music.' Coste thought a moment. 'Besides,' he said, 'where else can you get your ticks like you can in the band? Oh, that Duke opening,' he said, 'oh, that Palace!' The other guys, except Toby, who hadn't been there, of course, started to laugh.

'What about the Palace?' Toby asked. They were still laughing. 'Come on, now, what about the Palace?'

'Very funny to us, anyhow,' Coste explained. 'We were at Frazier's place. Seems that some time year in the band for me, again, when we heard that Mills had booked us into the Palace, Great. We were all set. The top vaudeville theater Great. Opening day. Opened with *Dear Old Southland*. Duke had women down some brass parts, to be played in our clothes, which opened *Southland*. We hadn't mentioned them. But the show opened with one of those Duke openings. No lights. Dark house. Duke brought his band down. And nothing happened,

not a damn thing. Duke turned to us, he said, 'Please fellows, please. Please! Please! Not a word. Not one word. We couldn't see a damn note. Opening day at the Palace, and not a note. Oh, it was funny. We fell out.'

The guys fell out again, thinking of that dead opening. But, as Coste explained, somebody had had sense enough to pull for lights, and with the coming of light, the show went on. Duke's Palace debut was made without further incident and the band went over.

'Hey,' said Sonny, 'there comes the man you named, Tricky.'

'The Trickster?' Toby exclaimed, as the rilly poly transformation howl started. Toby had named him Tricky Sam because his always did with one hand what somebody else did with two, anything to save himself trouble, he was tricky that way, a regular Tricky Sam.

'Mr. Skatnick, I do believe,' Tricky said, and bowed deeply, the bow all but cutting off his voice, that gesture became all sound.

'What's been happening, old man?' Toby asked.

'This and that,' Tricky said, noncommittal.

'Give me a hint then on the thin and then.'

'Well, one story anyone. Anybody tell him about Father What?' Tricky asked the assembled musicians.

'No, no,' they chorused, 'Tell him.' Sonny finished the chorus with a note of delight. 'What a character! What a character!' he mumbled.

'You remember old Harry White?' Tricky said, Toby nodded. 'True-bonds who used to play with all the bands up- town?' Toby nodded again. 'Oh the famous White Brothers Orchestra of Washington! He was with us in 1932. Really!' The guys laughed. 'He started a word in his four or five weeks with us. Father White organized the word 'jazzing.' don't let anybody tell you differently! He had a pet name for musician friends, used to call them 'my bag,' 'my bag that and my bag that. He had another favorite name for his favorite legend, whatever Father White had a solo to play, he always stepped off into the wings of the stage or back of the bandstand and

took himself a big score of what he called "jazz music." And he always had some "jazz music" around. One day, some presidential gals had Father's house, and as his apartment got a back and was the spot for his wife, he hulked, "Whoozait took my place, boy! Somehow that some flower, sweet, and finally got invited into the Lindy boppers, I guess because they bopped around as if they'd been plenty "jazz-music." But Father, What's the guy who said it first."

"That was his place," Gurney commented.

"Father White, Father White," Toby said, thinking about the terrible monochrome, "Father White."

The talk turned to records. The band had made lots of them while Toby was away. For Victor, Columbia, Okeh, Cameo, Decca, Perfect.

"Yeah," Toby said. "You guys were making records! I even picked up one of those old-fashioned records."

"Hit of the Week," Barney identified. "We were 'The Harlem Hot Shots' on that record. Sing Fox Sitters and St. James Infirmary Blues."

"That's right," Toby nodded his head.

"And we were Milt 'Ten Bluebeams'."

"And the Washingtonians."

"Both those were on Valeriano records," Barney identified. And the Memphis Hot Shots on Harmony.

"You boys were hot all over," Toby commented. "Harlem, Memphis."

"Oh, we were hot," Barney admitted. "We were MIM Hot Shots too."

"We were jolly, too," Gurney said. "The Six Jolly Jesters on one record."

"And from Dixie," Benny pointed out. "On Okeh, we were the Dixie Jazz Band."

"I remember," Toby said. "Remember, I made some of those records with you."

"So you did. So you did. Did you make whoopie with us?"

"Always," Toby laughed. "Quite a whoopie studio, I." The others laughed.

"I know," Benny acknowledged. "But were you a Whoopie Maker or recorder?"

"Don't remember."

"You know Eddie Connor was making whoopie for England. Some record man at Mills or Drake, somebody thought up the name for it. Figured it was a great idea. The Whoopie Mak-er." Benny's voice had great scorn.

"Don't forget the Harlem Footwarmers," Barney admonished. "We warmed our feet in Harlem, it said on Okeh. And Louie Johnson, the blues singer, was our leader."

"Heard some of those things," Toby said. "Cotton Club stuff. Snake Ship Dance and Jungle Jamblers, Louisiana. Cotton Club Stamp."

"Don't forget my number," Gurney said. "Rockin' in Rhythm."

"Who could forget your number?" Barney asked.

"The Jungle Band," Benny said, scornful again. "The Jungle Band."

"Accordion," Toby said. "I remember an accordion on one record and a couple of words."

"Baby Cox," Benny explained. "A black number for me."

Benny had done all the Ellington band's work with the Cotton Club and even after that continued to take some. The Club provided papers for their shows, so there Benny put many Ellington specialties. At the Kennedy, he'd sang a lot of things and was featured on Ellington broadcasts.

It was on hard on Brunswick, under the name of the Jungle Band, which had first checked great critical enthusiasm. The two-part Tiger Rag, Rockin' in Rhythm, East Party Blues, Double Check Stamp and Aerial Red were tremendously important for their time and will make very good listening. On the two-part Tiger Rag you hear a hot band, more like Henderson's kind of big-swinging music than Ellington, but full of good solo. Freddy Jenkins, Barney, Gurney, Hodges and Eubank and Tricky Sam, Rockin' in Rhythm was originally meant to accompany SnakeShip Tucker, the dancer at the Cotton Club. The band looks the first figure across, Connor plays his horn

solo. Barney and Tricky Sam and Duke share the rest of the record. These are the most famous of that early group on Brunswick, but there is much to listen to in the other records of the period, the others that are still available, that is, Barney and Whorral and Casey, sounding just like Toby, whom he replaced, on this, an *Infant's* And Casey on *Just Consider*, recorded very soon after he had mastered the great style of Golden Mile and belated as it still gets a mention. And *The Mooring*, which the band recorded for half a dozen different labels, with its loudly three-chorus voicing and the Halcyon-Ming choré staff in a kind of jazz strain.

This was the period when the band reached in and out of record studios with the same frequency with which they packed and unpacked their instruments for work. They made as many records then, even as early as 1929, thinking back over what Toby had missed, they couldn't remember everything they had done. Actually, they had made 128 record sides in the three-year interim between Henderson's leaving and replacing the band, and Duke had made a couple of piano solos, *Black Beauty*, *Barney's* lovely melody originally written for the big band, and *Swampy River*, a raggy kind of waltz-like chop-chope. The band was under contract to Victor and the bulk of its sides were made at the sign of the phonograph speaker and the listening dog. But there were also all the dates made under different names for the different companies flourishing in New York during these years, all the names used by the musicians and a few others as well, mostly Joe Turner and his Memphis Man and Sonny Green's Memphis Man, pseudonyms used on Columbia.

To this period belong *Flowing Fountains*, another masterpiece, and *Duke's* like *Four Fours*, a celebration of one of the hundred of short-lived dance rags which mushroomed in that time in hope of capturing some of the glory and the dough which the Charleston had generated. There was *Marksmen*, with its dashing brass triplets, and *The Dirty Gals*, like its successor, a "dirty" piece, very busy, very repetitively aware of all the tricks of the time. Mood pieces suggestive of faraway places, *Japanese Dream* and *Aviation Love*, and others suggestive only

of moods, *Missy Merman* and *When a Black Man's Blue*, and *Good Indigo*, in which, with a combination of trumpet and mandoline, muted, and clanging in chattering registers, Duke and Barney collaborated to produce one of the records, three measures into whose pattern irrevocably associated with Ellington.

There were close names, like *Crutcher's* Son and *Delight* and *Jimmy McHugh's* *I Want Have That Man and Dogs Dogs Do*, from *The Blackbirds* of 1921. There were the two big numbers from *Clash* and *Double Clash*, *Three Little Words*, which Bert Kalman and Harry Ruby wrote for the movie, and *King Don Kelly*, which Duke wrote for it, in which Sonny sang from bells. There were the "jazzpiano" numbers, *Echoes of the People* and *Jungle Blues*, and the recorded *Comedy Rhapsody*, one of the first attempts at large-scale writing. For this celebration week, Duke was granted the annual review of the *New York Herald of Music* as an American composer in 1932. There were just three pretty little tunes, *Like Sweet Dreams of Love*, and a couple on which Sonny sang, *Stoppie Joe* and *Biggie's Blues*.

In this three-year period, Duke recorded more of the work of composers other than himself and his bandmates than ever again in his life. But everything had the Ellington touch, the sound of his remarkable band, one great soloist after another, solo voicings and close ones, changing tone and register, every possible dynamic, rich combinations of instruments outside the dance band convention of brass lead, one counter melody, or two voices. Sometimes, Duke managed to catch the atmosphere of his world on his records, right from the beginning, and he built up an audience so fast as he could make the records, and Victor, Brunswick, Oriole, and the rest could get the records to the store. He had a few records which would have sold for anyone: names like *Clash* and *Dogs Dogs Do*; they were nice, rich, infectious hits. He had a few others which were pretty certain successes, *Three Little Words*, *Blues*, the *Scottie* but as had hundreds of other bands, now completely forgotten. Duke also had his own compositions, and those of his musicians, very few of them came as big names, Ellington compositions which never sold more than a few tens of thousands of records are still

around, and flamed in. The records, when they are out of print, are collector's items, highly creased, worth enormous money prices. When they are released, they sell out. These were good years, 1926-1932. Built at the record shop.

"In a horn a good few years," Sonny said.

"So I see," Toley said.

"Future should be good," Carney said.

"May-be," Sonny hoped.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PYRAMID

NINETEEN THIRTY-ONE AND THIRTY-TWO WAS A BIG YEAR FOR Duke, though it was one of the worst for his money plunging deeper into its ravaging Depression. It was big for Duke not only because the band made more money and played better business, but because he entered what might be called the Second Phase in that year. Lawrence Brown joined the band, Toley rejoined, lifting the music to quarter note, and five Arrangers made her five records with Ellington, Duke's meetings, now and ending hereafter, became really ambitious as he began to take advantage of the weekend and deepened and heightened concerns of his imagination.

Lawrence had just joined the band when Toley came back. He traveled with Ellington from the West Coast but didn't add his horns to the orchestra section until they were back East again. When he did, the effect was revolutionary for jazz. His only new instrument used in a three-man section for the first time in a horn trio jazz band (Mihurto, one and two had been the custom), but Lawrence's instrument, with Ellington, was now employed to project soft and sweet sounds. The quartet was no longer just a harmonic base. It was every kind of horn in one, and Lawrence Brown, undoubtedly the most versatile of jazz instrumentalists, could play them all.

Lawrence joined the band as a result of a sudden flash of inspiration and an accompanying thunder of desire. After play- ing the Paramount Theatre in New York, five colored band to play that same place, the Ellington band was finishing a week in its latest theater, the Brooklyn Paramount, in February. 32.

"I want to go to California," Duke said to Irving Mills, who was staying here in his dressing room.

"Okay," Mills assented.

And so they were on their way, on the long train trip to the Coast, with stop-offs on the way out. Through the band had just completed thirteen months of moonlighting. Duke was not dismayed at the thought of so much road time ahead. He loved travel. He loved snuggling off and seeing friends he'd made in Chicago and Cleveland and Milwaukee and a host of smaller towns he had played during those months. In Ohio, for example, there was that run at the Casino Parlor, a suburban spot which provided great luxury for himself and his musicians. There were ballrooms and theaters and friends he had made as such. It was fun to see all these people, to play a line of the better spots again. And besides, the Ellington band traveled in style, in even-did one-upmanship in numbers as 1935. It traveled in two cars especially designed for it, a sleeper and a baggage car. No less for the Ellington musicians, no lurching over back roads, no piling in at the last minute, squeezed into city hotels or sleeping sitting up. They had Pullman berths, lavatories assigned in order of seniority, Duke, Sonny, Wharol, Freddie Guy, Carney, Barney, etc. Duke was usually quartered in a roomette or drawing room, style.

There wasn't much trouble about getting good bookings for the band, either on the Coast or on the way out there. There was a great demand for it. Sonny broadcasting from the Casino Club had done it, with good playing from musicians Ted Husing was the Columbia Broadcasting System. For a while the band was on at the same time as *Amos 'n' Andy*, 9 to 10:15 P.M., Eastern time. It was a chance between races in Madison or just played by a Negro orchestra. Ellington was thousands of listeners in that competition. And then there was that special event broadcast, when Husing, up in a place over Manhattan, announced an Ellington "concert" from the Cotton Club, in a two-way broadcast.

Theater bookers had been impressed by the band's performance with Maxine Chandler, when the overbooked French

comedian had made his New York debut at the Fulton Theatre in 1935. Duke was booked on as a dual attraction and as answer power for Chandler. The Frenchman was scared of American audiences, mostly nervous about facing his first. Duke went on before him and received solid applause for his work, so much applause that Chandler looked up from his dressing-room mirror and asked what had happened. But there was no one around to satisfy his curiosity, so he came down to see for himself. He had almost pulled himself beyond the wings into full view of the audience when some of the guys in the band reached for him and pulled him back.

"You have nothing on but your knicker, old man," Sonny told him.

"Now Dibs, you are right," Chandler affirmed. "Dibs," he said, after thanking Sonny and the others for saving him from a ludicrous appearance, "what about these audiences? Will they be for me?" The musicians assured him they would. They clutched the applause the band had received and took him back to his dressing room, undisturbed and reverberating him as they went. Duke's French would have helped them, but a genuine rapport was established between Chandler and the band, and from the very first appearance, that show was a success. It helped Chandler. It helped Ellington.

The good success the band had received, its consistent success and its fine work in themselves resulted in excellent bookings all the way out and the top weeks in California. Duke played three at the Golden Gate Theatre in San Francisco and three at the Paramount in Los Angeles and came right back East again. He stayed in L. A. just long enough to pick up Lawrence Brown.

Lawrence and Lonnie Hampton, who played drums with the Lee Hill band owned by Louis Armstrong, were particular favorites of Frank Sebastian, who ran the Colver City Casino Club. They were regulars there, regardless of the band or bandleader who came in, their concerts were with Sebastian. Lonnie had come out to Los Angeles from Chicago a couple of years earlier, soon after his tremendous birthday. Lawrence was a Californian.

Irving Mills went out to the Cotton Club to catch the show. He listened to the great Louis and then was amazed to hear a young trombone, a handsome young man with more dignity than anyone that age had a right to, get up and play just as much hot music as his hero. His tone was beautiful, his technique impeccable. He played ballads with surprising straightforwardness. He played just like a trombone version of Armstrong, giving his melodic statements just inflection by his short notes, which added a gritty sound and a rhythmic lift.

"You're hot as," Milt said to himself.

"He's hot as," Milt told Ellington.

Duke went to hear Lawrence Brown play and was as impressed with him as Milt had been. He asked Lawrence to join his band.

"Gladly," Lawrence said. He was delighted to get out of the Armstrong-Hite band, not because of any grievance he had against Louis or Lea, but because of their manager. This manager had demanded that all the guys on the band travel out to the Cotton Club, which was far out of L. A., to take publicity pictures on Easter Sunday. "Just to take publicity pictures? I quit!" Lawrence said and he joined Duke.

Lawrence was born in Tepic, Kansas, but, from infancy, brought up in California. Educated in the public school system of Pasadena, he still makes grateful reference to that education: "Learned piano, violin, tuba, also, trombone. What could be more wonderful for a kid with musical inclinations? Every school in the nation should place that much emphasis on music, maybe more. Where does something like this end? A youngster interested in music hasn't any time for gang wars and such demanding ways of spending his time."

Lawrence had been a church-going youngster; he played in churches and on the sly, as a boy. His first "spectacular musical appearance" was before a Mother's Day crowd at home in the late James Scroggie McPherson's Temple in L. A. "I was scared stiff, as scared I've never gotten over it. I hadn't even that many people ever before in my life."

After school, the churches and radio, Lawrence graduated to

professional bands, playing with Charlie Johnson in a dance hall in Los Angeles and with the bands of Sebastian. He worked with Charlie Mackay's Blue Blowers and Paul Howerd's Quartet Serenaders, made his first records with these groups. "Not possible of which was one called *Charlie's Hat*, a series of variations on the chords of *Tiger Rag*." With Louis, he recorded *Goodbye*, *If I Could Be with You, I'm in the Market for You*, most of the sides Armstrong made on the Coast with the Hot group. The experience with Louis left Lawrence with a never-ending admiration for the bachelors.

He studied a while at Pasadena Junior College, medicine, criminology, but gave that up in favor of music. "I took all my time and spent my energy. I got logged down on my trunk. I just had to play." Joining Ellington was something of a blow to Lawrence's plans to see the world, to travel. But Duke told him of his plans to go to Europe in '32, and that was the chance. He met Ellington on a Tuesday and was on his way back East with him on Saturday.

Lawrence was and still is a man of strong moral convictions. "Of course," he says, "you know I never smoke, drink, gamble or cheat." But he doesn't preach, doesn't proselytize. Traveling back East with the band he allowed himself to be drawn out on these convictions just enough to state them and implement them, but not to the length of a sermon.

"Yes, fellows," he said, "I don't object to smoking, drinking, gambling or cheating on others, but I do think musicians are susceptible to criticism. It's unavoidable in their world. I know that drinking has caused the downfall of hundreds of great talents. I won't let it get me. I think a musician should consider music as his last love, responsibility," he said, talking very quietly, almost whispering. "You have to be a businessman, almost, almost your music. Be reliable. Money's got a mind and can know what you're doing. There are tough enough obstacles in a musician's life without adding any more. All the roughest doctors, cops and arm trouble, lung and muscle trouble. Add drink and you've got chaos. No, thanks."

One of the first shows the band made for Brunswick, when

It returned to New York, spotted *The Street of Aisy*, on which Lawrence played what he says was one of the only two solos he ever planned through from beginning to end. The solo was the famous *Rise of the Red Grange*, which Ellington used to highlight the last set of dances. Both were blown back, jumped, back-staved off Brown's great skill as a transposer.

It was this very skill, however, which some of Ellington's most enthusiastic supporters, notably the critic John Hammond, found a very great fault, at least out of place in the Ellington band. Hammond, Hatchcocked one of a wealthy family, was a vigorous supporter of hot jazz, friends of most of the men and women whom he admired as musicians and singers, a young man of violent likes and dislikes. His articulation of his feeling about jazz musicians was always provocative, generally eccentric, but sometimes based on personal feeling so strong that musical reasoning seemed to give way before emotional impression and political conviction. John's own musical background included years of study of the violin and viola; he had played often enough in string quartets and other chamber ensembles to be able to speak as a really informed amateur musician. And he'd been buying records ever since, as a boy in Iowa towns, he'd received his first audible pleasure and had been able to supplement that with homework from his mother's collection. All of this, the personal experience, the large record library, the close friendship with parents, combined with a copious writing style to make John Henry Hammond, Jr., America's first writer of serious jazz music. Whether or not he taught that position as the paragon of jazz criticism, his writing in the middle and late thirties for the popular music trade magazines, *Melody Maker* in England, *Down Beat* and, occasionally, *Metronome*, in this country, was like jazz that purring. John was an influence.

About Lawrence Brown, John wrote:

... He is a witness of the first rank, not only as a mere virtuoso of his technical ability. Probably no other transposer has his equipment.

But I'm afraid that this brilliant musician is out of place in

Duke's band. He is a white, who doesn't suspect the rudiments of coherent playing. Constantly he posits himself as the foreground, to any other musicians no objection could be made, but Duke's group is very properly the voice of our race, and that just is not Mr. Brown.

And Spike Hughes, "Miles" of the *Melody Maker*, an able musician himself and a writer of high standing in England wrote from America on a trip to meet jazz in the twenties:

The one person, in my mind, who is definitely out of place in Lawrence Brown. This solo is a grand player of the trumpet, and would be a tremendous asset to any other band in excess of his original style, but his solo work is altogether too "sweet" or "sophisticated." If you will, to be anything but out of place in Duke's essentially direct and simple music, Brown is as much out to that band as Kreisler would be playing first fiddle in the New York Philharmonic. It is not that his technical ability is too strong, just misplaced.

This is, of course, only my personal opinion. I have nothing but admiration for Lawrence Brown's ideas, as such, but by the very nature of mine to my no longer sharing.

After all, can you imagine Weather or Armstrong in Duke's band?

I can't.

The similarity of Hammond's and Hughes' opinions of Brown was more than coincidental. Spike's constant comparison in his time of New York jazz spots was John. Both men, too, make the same mistake in analytical fact. Granting Lawrence his technical prowess, John says "he posits himself to the foreground" constantly, which in meaning is an admission that is "the voice of our race," Duke. But, of course, whichever way you cut that, John is wrong: all the band is Duke's voice, even as to be who posits Brown as the foreground. If the band is not Duke's voice, then each man is situated in his own path. Actually, the band was and is both a collective expression and an individual one. Lawrence stood out because Duke wanted him so. Because Duke wanted the band to be a great deal more than his own voice, his greatness always had been in the freedom of

musical exchange among the band's constant members there its greatest would remain.

Hughes' peculiar analogy is typical of the hysteria with which early supporters of Ellington granted any change in his band. Kautler would not be out of place as 'first fiddle in the New York Philharmonic' any more than Benny Goodman is out of place in front of a band, or Tommy Dorsey in Louis Armstrong or any other virtuoso in or out of a band. And in a very easy to imagine Hawkins or Armstrong in Duke's band, one can do more than merely imagine, as a matter of fact. When Ben Webster joined Ellington in 1939, the band took on a instant complexion with a style as close as possible to Coleman Hawkins, as individual as Hawkins and as brilliant technically. Then listed per fection, he helped make some of Duke's best records. A few years later, Tootie Johnson, an ardent Armstrong admirer and disciple, joined the Ellington troupe and brought a voice remarkably like Louis into the band. He has lived beautifully.

John and Spike (using the pseudonym of "Mike") had other dissonant comments to make about Duke and the band. Though in 1939 and '41 these brilliant critics, and others soon to leave the Ellington camp, still supported Duke, still praised the band enthusiastically, still made generalizations of endorsement of his musical product, their suspicion and disappointment of much of the work was growing. They began to find records which weren't 'the real Duke,' though they never defined 'the real Duke.' Their taste, in general, was expressed by Hughes, who included the recording, *Jungle Nights in Harlem*, "using my favorite examples of Ellington music on account of its good 'low-downness'."

These well bred youngsters, very proper in look, manner and dress, wanted just as highbrow their sense of propriety. When Duke achieved any considerable ostentatiousness in his music, when the sounds which issued forth from his band bore any resemblance to the conventional sounds of the symphonic orchestra, they passed him. Their taste ran to blues, "low-down" blues, and when Duke strayed from the security of that haunted

past time, being content to take from it what he could and add to it what he could, they took a quick retreat from their earlier position of knowing adoration of Ellington. There were still a few years to go before John and Spike and their followers began their mature criticism of Ellington as "arty," "pretentious" and "not jazz," but the loss was being laid with the criticism of Deans.

When the band returned to New York after the six weeks on the Coast, it got down to some serious recording activity, and not only did Lawrence Brown make his first appearance on records with Duke, but so did Ben Anderson. Duke's first regular girl vocalist. There had been a few isolated vocals on Ellington records: those by Scamp, Dick Robertson's on *Sam and Delilah*, Adelaide Hall on *Crescent Love Call* and *Blues I Love to Sing*, Ruby Cox on the *Oldies But and Newies* and Maudie. But was, however, the first girl Duke ever hired for the express purpose of singing with his band. She almost was the last: she stayed twelve years.

She was born in Colby, California, and studied at a convent just there, St. Mary's, from the ages of nine to thirteen. Two years in Washington: some voice study in the capital city and singing in the glee club and chorals at school, and then Anderson was ready for the Coast again, and her first job, she worked at Toot's in Los Angeles and on the Tour, run by Alie Lyman's brother Mike. When a featured singer in the Fanchon and Merna revue started the famous blues singer Maudie Smith become ill, her stepped out of the chorus line to sing the solo because a part on one sister's sister. Other jobs in a continuous followed, leading to that role in *Shuffle Along*, a spot at Manhattan's Casino Club, a five number tour of Australia with a Fanchon and Merna unit, and finally her own group in a revue which toured West Coast theaters for twenty weeks. There was even one short engagement with Alvin Weeks' white band at the Mark Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco.

In 1939, she was a featured singer in the show at the Grand Theatre Club in Chicago, she returned at the Terrace until

well into the winter of '31, until February 15. That was the day she was asked to work with Duke at the Oriental Theatre in Chicago.

"Go over and audition for Duke," Earl Hines, who led the band and booked the talent at the Terrace, told her.

"Wouldn't think of it," Iris replied. "I'm not good enough."

"Don't be foolish, baby, that's right for you, that's your class," Earl assured her, lifting harder on his high-black cigar for emphasis.

"All right, I'll make a week with him," Iris promised. "If he wants me," Duke did.

The week was only four, the four Duke spent in London and Earl Hines in Chicago, and the four ran into a dozen years. Iris quickly studied Duke and was herself quickly studied with the band.

The first record Duke made with Ellington was the first record the band made after returning from the Coast. It wasn't *Mean a Thing If It Don't Got That Swing*, as Ellington says which has had been hanging over the middle of eggs. "This, the first song to use the term 'swing' for jazz, made four. It was one of Duke's big record hits and one that, incidentally, used with deadly accuracy the term which so many misused and abused later on. Swing, in the jazz musician's lingo, was and is a way of playing; it describes the hit which the propelling beat of this music gives its solo and the jazz ensemble. With any kind of feeling for jazz, you can tell whether a band or an individual pianist swings, gets a swing. Duke was confirming a conviction of his musical credo when he said, "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing." His music was always in tempo, always secure behind the drive of his rhythm section. At somewhat greater length, in a somewhat more dignified manner, he reiterated this position in 1935.

How very few are dependent on rhythm, for everything we do is governed by natural rhythmic sequences that modern dance music of the best type is completely rhythmic—a only an accordance with natural law.

Much has been said of the show piece of the band—the melody

instrument—and I have given a full card of the proposed melody because everyone who really understands the dance beat of today knows that it is the rhythm source which is by far the most important, without a solid base of impeccable rhythm, no matter how brilliant the melody section, the band can never be successful.

Sonny Greer, making high atop his shining array of drums, was head man in the rhythm section. His sensitive understanding of Ellington as an individual musician and as a band leader made it possible for him to play without a score. Just give Sonny a band rehearsal of a new thing, man, and he knows his part. Besides, Duke was always below him in the piano, "stroking the band with rhythm," as Duke himself put it. Duke's direction that Earl exaggerate and rapid chromatic runs are when used the pianist plays solo was closely followed. And Duke was a hard worker at the keyboard, leading the audience with his steady lifting of his hands, leading the band with his rhythmic chording at the piano. He and in 1935, then the pianist man avoid the overwhelming urge to improvisation on the melody, "has never he begins to neglect his unshakable rhythm, the whole system, which is dependent on him, immediately loses its snap and becomes ragged."

Nothing rapped or swayed about the Ellington band in 1935 and '36. There was *East Stream*, with its very rhythmic, very mobile variations on the theme carried chiefly by Sonny on drums—the other side of *It Don't Mean a Thing*. There were all the old and new things, the refined music of *Long Shapely*, *Blue Tune*, *Blue Rhythm*, and the steady jazz motion of *The Bird of Study* and *Daddy Waddy* and *Frankly Franked* *Sam Low*.

Freddie Guy had not yet reached from bump to power, and there was a fairly sustained sound in the rhythm section of this band, but in everything else, the 1935 edition of Ellington has outdone the year. Harmonically, melodically, in the tone color, in the instrumental textures of the band, the sound of modern jazz is on these records. Rhythms and textures were of really being used in a free interplay which gave Duke's organ-

back version of the *St. Louis Blues*, combining his stunning talent and the soaring and playing brilliance of the Ellington organization, Duke made *Swampy Music* as a piano solo again, with another keyboard piece, *Fast and Furious*, on the back, and other pianists brought the record to determine whether or not the leader of this magnificent band was "any ball" as an instrumentalist. His playing had always been as much a part of the band they'd never been able to decide. The record didn't help; it was straight symphonic stuff, piled so high, filled with rather pleasant funk, but empty of much actual significance. The talk went on, as the records rolled forth. *Eggleston*, which made everyone marvel again at Gurney's command of his housewife. They complained when Duke, with a vocal by Swampy, was not listed in the country. They hummed and wheeled *Deep Me Q's in Motion*, and used its length again as their own when *Swampy-Ga-Round* was another Ellington record heard overseas but not in this country. Musicians and dancers and Ellington fans knew it well: it was a hard people. But it wasn't until one year when it was released abroad that it was released over here, and then in a newer version. The voice of Lew Luster's spectral off-key voice, *Blackbirds of 1945*, first and most distinguished of a series, was still its precursor in 1955, and so Duke recorded the big tunes from that show. There was first a two-sided blackbirds melody, then, with Ethel Waters, *I Can't Give You Any More Love, Baby* and *Ferry-Whistle* that joined with the band to do *I Want More Than You and Baby*, and the Mills Brothers, just coming at them, sang *Sigs Digs Doo*, with Ellington support. One of the first jazz albums ever issued, the label was printed in so small a number that its composition class soon became collectors' items, almost impossible to get. But here and abroad, individually and as the set, the "at Blackbirds" music as done by Ellington and Waters and Hall and the Mills boys was music for excited talk. You couldn't see Ethel despite her large stage toward the sides, tall and unbridled her head-dressed, but you could sense her exuberant personality in their words. Adelaide's nervous village made *I Want More Than You* effective all over again, and the best of the band supplied what

elphons looking was missing from the Mills Brothers' rather straightforward, undramatic singing of a rhythm song.

The Cotton Club Parade of 1935 featured a show written by Ted Koehler (lyrics) and Maxell Arlen (music). Duke recorded all of it, the music, as it was advertised, was played just as it was played at The Cotton Club, live song the four songs done that did pretty well, *Swampy* the first, *Happy as the Day is Long* and *Get Together a New Dream*, and one that swept a nation with its plaintive strains, *Swampy Weather*. The other side of *Swampy Weather* was occupied by an exciting tune based on a theme by Toby Harlow, something called *Sophisticated Lady*. Before long the nation carried *Swampy Weather* on the other side and the lady of sophistication found herself the center of nations, much whistled at and danced with. This is one of the few rules still current on which Toby's country also can be heard in side. And then, just before the band left for Europe, four more talks: *I'm Satisfied*, in which Duke combined with Maxell Arlen, the writer of the lyrics for *Happy Goodbye's Standard*, in one of his first attempts to write an out-and-out commercial song: *Swampy*, bringing another new jazz record to record this, and showing off the drive of this set, *Swampy* *Swampy*, jumping in to its grade, swing in its rhythms, infectious music, and the beautiful remodeling of the American standard, *In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree*, in the tune of the new Ellington band.

The band left for Europe that June with a few strings, many ensembles and a certain satisfaction. The money was coming in, the name was growing. For outside freedom were first, correct occasion had been passed. And they could look forward to Europe, where they knew an eager audience would cheer, where there was no other time, it was real, and there was nothing but great love for the music and personality of the Negro musician. Perhaps in the new atmosphere, and the local television, the band could really find itself. There was bound to be more understanding of an experimental kind of music in Europe than there was at home in America. And this was something the band wanted very much. As has always

been men of the Eltington associates, no matter how much they criticized Duke and each other, they defended the band as a unit to outsiders with all the scruple and blood of which they were capable. Many of them were personally disgruntled as the band changed musical shape and individuals became somewhat less important than they had been, but all were unanimous in the validity of this conviction in the eyespan of European music men.

Duke, too, looked forward to Europe for the same reason. Only his musical life needed straightening out; his personal affairs were beautifully arranged in 1933.

CHAPTER NINE

HARLEM RIVER QUIVER

DUKE HAD SETTLED DOWN TO THE UNSETTLED LIFE OF THE last twenties and early thirties. It was time to take advantage of his new position, and he had. Not accepting favors from songpluggers, money or liquor or seats to the theater or privileges. Not buying his way into the nation, not participating in the business of bootlegging liquor, which he could have done as the life of his little finger off the piano keyboard and at very great profit so that little Roger, just coming back and enjoying some of the luxury his money could buy and more that his position afforded him. Extra-special attention all around, check bookling about to do his bidding in the restaurants he frequented (he frequented many), making him special dates and giving him extra large portions. Feeling so free, and time to do something about it.

Edna had followed Duke to New York in 1929, and for a few years they had a wonderful time together. But somewhere, after their first few years in New York, when Duke went to Brown's and the Kentucky, the old ties had broken and the old understanding had been replaced by a new misunderstanding. In Washington, Duke and Edna had had so much in common. In New York, after a while, the only thing they had deeply in common was young Mirron, and he was off at school in Washington, being looked after by Duke's folks.

In Washington, whenever Duke and Edna had a disagreement, or Duke was seriously disturbed by a personal problem, he could go into extraordinary scenes with his mother. He would call to her and more than likely they would end up in the bathroom, where they could find real privacy and Duke

could talk his heart out. In New York, there was nobody to talk to ever with, and the misunderstandings grew to beyond patching. Duke and Helen solemnly broke up their marriage.

There was a new girl in Duke's life. Mildred Brown was her name. She danced at the Casino Club above Jack Henry Wrenn, the room of Mildred and Howard. Short, dark, bright, doll-appearing with rather background. She spoke softly and sweetly, and Duke always felt a great nervousness in what she said. And with that nervousness was an intense interest on his part in what he said.

"Yes, yes," she would say, "go on." Duke would tell her of the latest hard news, the latest twist of man, what he had done and would do and could do. "Yes, yes," she would say, "go on."

Mildred and Henry opened at the Casino Club on the same show that Duke did, opened on the same night, December 4, 1917. It was their first meeting. She'd seen him perform and appear at some of the late spots but had never met him. She was impressed at the Casino Club. Duke, who always had an eye for beautiful young things, looked up from the piano and stared. Since he played with his feet well in front of him, and with his toes curved to the outside, if he got interested in something other than the music, he could always take the chords, put one his hands deftly over the keys and make it look like, even if he weren't playing a note. He took the first time he saw Mildred. Some after, when he felt secure in his position at the Club, he didn't play at all, didn't take or anything else, just jumped off the stand and went to talk to her.

"Hello, baby," he said, as he bowed ceremoniously. "You are absolutely more than I ever look beautiful."

Mildred became Mrs. Ellington. Duke moved in with her at her apartment house, directly above. Things weren't perfect, but they were very good. It was so much fun together, they understood each other so well. Mildred knew Duke never knew where the hell he'd put anything and might at any moment yell for it. Oh, for shoes or socks or slippers, pants or jacket or tie, the comic papers or that book.

That book, those days, was generally one of the volumes in the big set of Historical Romance. They both got a big heart out

of reading about the "great loves of the past." Perhaps there was something analogous in their relationship, maybe not, but though they didn't read the books to measure the depth of their attachment to each other, it was nice to look in the reflected light of old loves as they dreamed their way through the novel.

Something about the night life on Sugar Hill, the streets dancing away from the Harlem River, ascending staircases up down the Harlem street. Something about the clubs, bounding down the dancing streets to their right above, bounding along suspended on their French heels, dancing past the brownstone houses all lit up in the late night and early morning.

Brown was the color. Brownstone houses of a city's faded elegance, brownstone houses left over from the days of America's first capitalism for there, no greater name, moving along under the ready propulsion of a class system, Duke's and Fletcher's and McKinney's and the Massarons and others. Towers, smalltown mansions and towers, such as it is the Hill, rose over the Polo Grounds and the Bronx beyond. Duke made his of river into his music. Harlem River Quaver, The River and Me, Swampy River. Sometimes he was writing about other waters, but the poems were usually the river by the Hill. With only half an ear and less than a moment's notice at that music, Duke was absorbing words of Rabel and Debussy. Their harmonic formlessness came to him naturally, their opulence, the fluid sounds of the underwater music, were as much part of his life as of theirs. The brown water of the Harlem river. The brownish girls and the brownstone houses. Something above the night lights on Sugar Hill.

Just it was Measure at 1920 and Brown. That was the champagne place, where the liquor was best and the wine most attractive and the fare most friendly.

Then it was to Jerry Freeman's on eggs and you went. That was because Mother had gone West where the weather would prevent his haun from the changes which rain brought and the money would still be comfortable. Jerry Freeman's to talk and drink and eat at, and meet your friends at four and five and six in the morning. There was a remarkable change about those

daily morning conversations when all the facts of life somehow lined up and aligned themselves. The blue and red light of the little incandescent bulb revolved through and through clear orientation about the aims and the means of achieving the aims.

"Peace is what I want," Duke murmured as he opened a thick door of ebony.

"Peace is what you've got," Mildred reminded him.

"Peace and calm," Duke murmured, as if his body's heard her.

"Peace and calm are what you've got," Mildred repeated.

"Peace," Duke sighed.

He was expressing a philosophy of life, a yearning. Peace was possible. Peace, maybe, at any price.

"Those arguments at the club. Don't like 'em," Duke said.

"Can't be helped," Mildred suggested.

"Don't like 'em."

Duke sat some more and waited balls to friends coming in from other parts of the city, arriving as fast as the subway and taxis could carry them, as the club and their speaking and the other private party let out.

"How about Milt passing his name on your card?" Mildred asked.

"We've talked about that before," Duke answered.

"How about it?"

"If it makes him happy."

"You'll have peace and calm at any price," Mildred assured him. "You have."

"Peace is what I want," Duke murmured, as he unlocked the last piece of steel.

The routine was the same wherever they went, New York or Chicago or Philadelphia or L.A. There was always some star-studded party, some place to eat or drink or talk or do two of them or all three. In New York, it might be fired chicken or somebody's grill, and in Chicago it was pretty sure to be ribs, the pick of the country's hogs for a lower of the short ribs, the

spare ribs where they were best spare, Cracking with the heat of the spit, black carbon where the fat had burned the edges, black carbon against the midnight brown of the clear meat on the short ribs. Dip it into a tangy-splummy hot sauce. Or smear the ribs first with the sauce and then reach down with your fingers into the thick goo for the tough meat, feeling the snap of the red pepper on your fingers as you made for it. "Oh, Miss Jackson," Duke had written in a lyric, "you've got some fine barbecue . . . Your ribs are Levantine, super-Herculean . . ."

In New York, they developed a pleasant routine at the Cotton Club. Into the early hours of the morning they would play cards, Duke and Mildred and Harrison Ford, who managed and later owned the place, and Friendly. Friendly, who was associated with the syndicate which ran the Cotton Club. Friendly, who loved Mississippi and was devoted to Duke.

"Anything you want, Duke," Friendly was wont to say, "anything you want, you just ask, boy, and it's yours." And he could make good his offer, as few others could.

Now they played when, that ancient game, postroomer of bridge, bowerbird and underdog and a little wearing after a whole night. Then pleasant Friendly was the great road game at three days. Something about the rubber deck and the hot colors of the double number of her cards seemed right on the road, as trains, in local towns and backlogs dressings. Friendly wasn't, which was the quietest man behind the best artists and the best to eat and drink and talk with. It was much easier to interrupt the mending of men and the arranging of tea, Jack, Queen, King in sequence with eating and talking and drinking, than to hunt to upon the complicated mends of possible with a new joke or a great quaff of beer.

And you might have some good stories to tell too. You might tell them about that guy who requested the St. Louis Blues.

"He danced up to me with this girl he was dancing with," Duke told them. "Tall, skinny guy, with a friendly manner."

"Please play the *St. Louis Blues*," he asked me. "I can't dance," he explained, "unless I can sing the words to my girl and these are my favorite words."

"Not once or twice, mind you, but whenever these are coming up to me and ask me to play the *St. Louis Blues*. I play it for him. At the end of the evening he comes up to me again."

"How about once more, baby?" he asks. He's a friendly fellow. I play it for him again. He comes up to me after I finish.

"Thanks, baby," he says. "I really appreciate that. Here, boy!" he says, "here yourself a cigar." I look at what he gives me and it's a thousand-dollar note.

"I don't know where I can buy a cigar that expensive," I say.

"That's okay," he says. "I like that. It's worth another." And he gives me another *Grande*. "Anyone anybody can make me high it's worth a grand to me," he says. Duke laughs. "Yeah," he says, "a friendly guy."

"Anybody I know?" Freddy asks.

"Yeah," Duke answers, "nobody you know, Legs Diamond."

"Oh, that Legs," Freddy comments. "What a character! They say he's got diamonds and rubies and emeralds in the holes on his legs and stomach, wherever they shot him."

"Haw," Mildred says, "haw."

In 1929, J.E. and Aunt Daisy came up to New York to see their boy and they were impressed. A year later they came to stay, Ellington, mother, and daughter Ruth and Duke's son, Mercer. They all moved over to one of Harlem's best apartment houses, 316 Edgecombe Avenue, overlooking the river. Five rooms were spread among them, three bedrooms, living room and kitchen. Duke spent to get the place in shape. A ball-roomed border and my furniture and, for his personal special convenience, one of those long Pierce Arrow, a seven-cylinder automobile, low to the ground. A boy was hired to drive the car and come as personal aide to Duke's parents, particularly to look after them when Duke was out of town. This aide, Tommy Lavigne, gave Duke a new name. Duke was called

Edward by his parents, by his sister, by many of his friends. Tommy called him *Consistent*. The next day was easy.

"Dumpy," Ruth called to her brother.

"Dumpy," Mildred called to Duke.

"Dumpy," even J.E. called on.

It took, to tell the name of the Claps, Freddie and Mercer, Freddie and his wife Fred in the next apartment house, 316, on the Ellington house, and spent great quantities of time with Duke and Mildred and the family. They played cards in each other's apartments after work and so in the early morning hours together. Duke, who put very horrendous amounts of land in that or any other time, was beginning to develop a profile before the then.

"Hey, Dumpy," Freddie would call to Duke.

"Oh, Dumpy," Mildred laughed.

"Dumpy, dear," Ruth began conversations.

The "Dumpy" shortening for "Dumpy" defined the family and also friends as a description of the burgeoning Ellington figure. It stuck, too.

The family was a close unit. Duke was overwhelmed with the pleasure of having family and Mildred and her work as closely juxtaposed. Ruth shared Mildred. Mildred was so sweet to Ruth. Whenever Mildred went on a shopping tour to buy anything, anything at all or of no consequence at all, she took Ruth along and bought something for her, too. And Ruth, just approaching college age when the family moved in with Duke, was more than optimally appreciative. Bills and notes had the usual effect for the adolescent girl, bills and notes and other signs of attractive color and texture.

"Come on, honey," Mildred would say to Ruth. "Let's go downtown."

"What for?"

"You need a new coat, baby."

Come and buy and show and especially their off stockings for young Ruth, growing up to look so much like her brother Edward.

"One thing you can say about those Ellingtons," someone in the hotel said, "they sure look it."

Even Duke Mercer was beginning to show signs of the Ellington physiognomy. His eyes were dark and unsmiling like his father's, but not so often set in a permanent frown. His face was long, like Duke's, but not so rounded. His figure was lanky, wiry, and gave signs of developing into athletic build. But ambitions weren't Mercer's major interest. Airplanes were. He built his dreams of model planes and gave serious thought, at certain thoughts to a fourteen-year old impish, to a career in aeronautics.

"Hey, Father Tolsoned," he said to Duke, "I'm gonna be an aviator."

Another time, it was, "A mechanic, I'm gonna be."

"What about it, Eddie," Mildred asked (Eddie, still another nickname, came from Duke's initials J. E. E.)

"I dunno," Duke said, "I dunno at all."

"Why don't you know? The boy's got a probably wonderful ambition, and it's a real one. You can see by the way he looks around with model airplanes that it's real. You don't know?"

"No, Sweet Eddie, it isn't as simple as that, you ought to understand. Mercer's got just a little boy interested in airplanes. Mercer's a colored boy. And I'm not sure, not at all."

"But, Eddie darling, why not? I know it won't be easy for him. Nothing's easy for any of us. Why not get his ticks on the airplane business as much as any other?" Mildred was, if not adamant, at least devoted to Mercer's cause.

"Some business my brother for so then others, you prefer that. The airplane business is a young one, new and uncertain. Anything this new ain't gonna have room for a colored boy. Don't forget that. I don't mean a lanky boy like Mercer, either, I'm thinking of a kid who's well-educated and older. But he's a Negro and they're not going to make opportunities for him. That's such a lot to overcome."

"I'm sorry you feel that way," Mildred said.

"Aw, Sweet Eddie," Duke countered her, "don't act as if there's nothing Mercer can do. There's always the music business, you know."

Duke was concerned about the future of his music, and he thought a great deal about Mercer and the impressions and impressions heavily he would some day leave him.

"Don't you see, darling," Duke said, "who else am I gonna leave my music to? Somebody's gonna have to, and Mercer is the logical person. And, anyway, the music business is our business. He only gonna have such a struggle just to keep his head above water. I like that, now?"

Mercer had made some forays into the music business, just the whisper of studies. Mildred studied some piano and absorbed more of the art and the business hanging around the band. In Harlem, to measure, had been able to hear a lot of her father's music and musicians, and after coming to New York he didn't miss many opportunities of the band. The airplane enthusiasm never got killed, however, with Duke's expressed disliking. Mercer was a brilliant mathematics student, the considerable envy of Ruth, who was fighting the hard fight with the captains at Westhigh High School, where she finished secondary school education in New York. Mercer was a bright boy in the sciences generally and continued to show interest in aeronautics. A few years later, Mildred made serious inquiries about a good technical school in that field, and ended, reasonably enough, upon the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Mildred was a Boston girl and had contacts. Since they lived so well with airplanes, she made contact with her contacts, and in spite of a few colored quips, she was able to show evidence for Mercer. That is, he could get in if he could pass the entrance examinations. He passed them and everything looked set, until Duke's old doubts popped up again, and as each time and with each feverish passing there was difficulty for everybody in the family from J.E. down to grandson Mercer, the one most concerned. Mercer, immensely, wasn't any seriously disappointed. He had music and supported the word and thought of his father. And it really looked like a delicious field for his people there. The future was back in airplanes was hard to predict in the mid-thirties.

J.E. was an intense participant in family discussions, and his opinion was sought often. But J.E. might also be wiser than

famously discernible. Marston was a holiday to Duke's father. Like son, like father. Though devoted to his wife, he had an eye for the chicks. His law was, if anything, better than his son's, based upon longer experience. He was more of a verbal philosopher than anything else, but the words were true to the mark and the charm of his personality so great that it was pretty hard, if you were a girl in the show at the 119th Street Apollo Theatre, say, or a housewife at the Savoy Ballrooms, perhaps, or in the Cotton Club line, to escape entirely from his spell.

He was known all over Marston. People would say him anything.

"Here comes old Uncle Ed," a girl would say, smiling to her friend, who looked across the main row of handpicks she did.

"Hello, my darling," Uncle Ed would greet them. "My," he continued, "you look colored out today. I don't know what it is about the younger generation, something about their boys that always leaves the girls looking tired. Now my influence is more useful. What you need to do is to hang out with Uncle Ed more often." He usually concluded his speeches with, "Won't you join me?"

Duke's father was adored wherever he went. The young girls would track him with him. The older ones would enjoy talking more intimately with him, exchanging stories about Woodrow and New York and what J. E. could remember of the South directly and indirectly through his father's tales. As a blasphe-mizer for the Negro, he had lost a semi-privileged position, with more of the confidence than most of his people experienced in the Farmer's Capital in those days. He had spent his leisure time well, reading and talking with outstanding people, and when he came to New York, having retired, as Duke's father said, he could spend all his time to those pleasant pursuits. He looked extremely well, a great deal younger than his fifty-two years when the family moved to New York; he looked in his forties. Close-cropped hair and a head shaped more like his grandson Marston's than Duke's gave him her a sturdy look. A square jaw, added to a natural robustness, sometimes made him seem the least comestible of men. But his eyes were, when looked beneath

his restless eyebrows, and the line of his upper lip, just like Duke's, set to a middle path from either side, edged by a mustache which added sparkle to his face.

Many Kennedy Ellingtons was aware that in the dominant impression people carry of her. She was considerate of their feelings, anxious to make visitors at the apartment feel at home, and deeply aware of her responsibilities, so anxious she passed on to her son. She would often put Marston on the back and send him off to see Edna, who lived near by. But Marston needed little prodding; he was then, as he is now, deeply devoted to his mother.

Everybody who knew Duke knew his mother and father, and their life as it was full. From the little office to the act which shared billing with Duke in the radio and stage shows, close friends and professional acquaintances, people up and down Harlem and midtown knew them. As the long, late Fifties-Armies made their progress through Harlem's streets, there would almost always be someone at a street corner, suddenly crossing the car's path between corners, to lead Duke's parents, as my father to Marston or Ruth, maybe to ask how Duke was.

No doubt about it, Duke would say to himself, things are going pretty well. In 1931, things were so well, as Duke well something had to be done about it, Duke decided. At Christmas, something was done.

They were playing a theater, Christmas week, 1931. First thing to do, Mildred decided, was to up the place. She chose one of the more ramshackle dressing rooms—none was especially large, but the one would do. She decorated the room, hung it with heavy wreaths and fir branches. She got a live-mead tree and suspended a galaxy of lights from it, so that it fully showed the season's greetings. Over one corner of the room she even hung a dish of cranberries. This would be a Christmas. Then the handily was sent around to ask the boys in, everybody, the act on the bill, eventually in any way associated with the band.

"Duke and I come to the dressing-room on the second floor," the handily announced.

"What dressing room?" Barney asked.

"Second from empty one."

"What the hell has" somebody else asked.

"Isn't that a damn shame?" somebody asked of everybody. "Christmas and we gotta go to a dressing room. Run over a new arrangement, huh? Or just talk about something. Ain't that a damn shame?"

"I'm not going," somebody said flatly.

"Better go," the bandboy warned. "Duke says so."

"I'll be damned," somebody said.

"Let's go, folks," the bandboy said.

Grumbling as they went, wondering or just annoyed or bored, the Ellington musicians went to the dressing room on the second floor to see Duke Ellington.

"Everybody in?" Duke asked.

"Not yet, Swampy," Freddie Guy informed him.

Finally, everybody was in. Duke turned to them.

"Look, folks," he said.

"Here it comes," somebody whispered to somebody else.

"Look, folks, this has been a good year, a very good year all around. This is a very Merry Christmas for me, and I sincerely hope it will be for you, a very Merry Christmas. I got something for you, don't know whether it suits everybody's taste, after all, some people like different colors, different models. You know how it is. But maybe you'll like this stuff. Millions taste is impossible, you know. Anyway, here they are. Let's see 'em out," he concluded as Mildred and the bandboy.

They donned the coats, as the packages came up. "Eatin'," "Barney," "Kathie," "Foxy," "Tricky," "Corny," "Duke," "Freddie Guy," "Swampy," "Broad," "Archie." Then, "The Boys," and the Four Boy Brothers, who danced on the ball with the band, stepped up. "Sam," and Sam Fladmark, retail manager of the band, took his. The bandboy (the younger responsible for setting up music stands, packing and unpacking instruments, doing errands) and even a couple of theater employees were given packages.

The packages were of a dozen different sizes, large and small

and medium. Wrapped in almost as many colors, they were gaily decorated with shining ribbons. The Christmas spirit shone in them as it did on the tree, on the branches and bolly and madams around the dressing room. They were opened with the happy noise that always attends the opening of Christmas packages, a crackling and growling of paper, a some recognition of the reluctant sitting Goochie and Swampy and Archie, Foxy and Tricky, Corny, Sam and Freddie Guy, Swampy and Broad and Arthur Whetzel, the bandboy and Sam Fladmark and the four Brothers opened their packages, looking for ties and socks and suspenders, maybe a shirt or two or a sports jacket.

Swampy was the first.

"I like this color, Duke," he said. "I like it fine."

"Yeah, Duke," Tricky said as his high, soft voice. "Four color."

"Green, green," Foxy justice answered, "green like another earth. Green is my color."

"That's very good of you," Harry Caney said with more humility.

"Gee, Duke," the Boys acknowledged.

They were all pretty happy, and quick in one way or another to acknowledge their happiness, to make their Christmas debts now known. They had all received money, in varying amounts. The boys in the band got bags apiece, the Boys, Sam, and the bandboy and some of the theater people the most than Fladmark, Sam. Wrapped in all the differentiated packages, unopened so transparently, the recipients of these presents that Christmas (but) looked forward to quite as much and were that much more surprised, at least, when they opened their packages.

Christmas was the time, too, to exchange enormous tokens of family affection, white-washes and other jewelry of consequence, the best Duke could obtain, and even an auto, once, the first, but that was a few years later. Duke would find much of the presents to him shortly after getting them and might even forget he'd ever received them, but on Christmas itself he was all

arms, working with as much pleasure as had given, and giving all the more pleasure to his family as a result.

The money was being gaily won. Mildred and Duke rolled about it occasionally, usually around the subject of living bills.

"Where does it all go?" Mildred asked.

"All over, all over," Duke explained unconcernedly.

"That makes it all clear," Mildred said.

"God, babe, look, there are the expenses at home, right?" Mildred nodded. "And the expenses on the road?" She nodded again. "And the expenses of the family. That'll add up."

"Do you bother to add it up yourself?" Mildred asked.

"No, noo really," Duke answered.

"Have you ever figured Mild's take, and all the other business expenses?" Mildred asked.

"No, not really," Duke answered. "But look, babes, babe, if, after home and the road and the family, there's anything left Mild and anybody else is welcome to it. Anything they can find, let 'em take it."

Duke meant that, at the time, he was damned if he'd worry about an extra dollar or hundred or thousand. He'd lived just long enough in that era of thousand-dollar tips and demand spending to have money for money to such. Just as long as he was free from worry, so long as he could buy the *Flamingo-Avenue* and pay the salaries and have the little and large comforts he wanted, everything was all right.

Yes, Duke was damned if he'd worry about an extra dollar, but, on the other hand, he seemed to be damned. It was damnation by force or forces means. Some of the symptoms were clear, some of the dancing poses were obvious, but they didn't explain everything.

The early thirties were a strange and difficult time for a musician like Ellington. There was one source of worry. For the early thirties, unlike the early twenties, were years of the locus in jazz. The field was swarming with "Mickey Mouse" music, "cheap" or "toy" bands, as the persons told orchestra which rely upon synthetic sounds rather than music for popular ap-

peal. Jazz had taken shape under the direction of the New Orleans originators, Joe Oliver and Louis Armstrong and the Original Dixieland Jazz Band. It had gathered speed and made some late professionalisms in Chicago and Kansas City and New York, so just spool up the Mississippi River to palmier North and West and East. There were no migration few years in Chicago, with Oliver and Armstrong and Earl Hines and Jerome Roemer leading the way, more or less to the New Orleans tradition. There, in the early twenties, the big bands started piling. Fletcher Henderson and Duke, and, less significantly, Benne Moon and McKinney's Cotton Pickers and the Mississippi and a host of lesser outfits which could boast a star soloist or two, even Paul Whiteman and Ted Lewis, the leading white show bands of the time, were infected by the virus. Whiteman, at various times, featured such jazz men as Joe Veneta and Ben Badolacchi and the Dorsey Brothers, Mildred Bailey and Earl Hines, Muggsy Spanier and, later, Benny Goodman and Paul Whiter recorded with Ted Lewis.

By the late twenties, the taste for jazz was beginning to wear off in American audiences, though great money was still being played. Chick Webb married his band and Ben Pollack his, with Jack Teagarden and Benny Goodman and Gene Krupa and Glenn Miller and other such stars. Red Nichols made lots of fine records, some of the first to employ modern dance band arrangements, many more of the white men mentioned above. Andy Kirk had a good band going in Kansas City. Ben Chick and Pollack and Kirk worked in comparative obscurity, and though Henderson and Ellington had successes of some size, and even Goldkorn and McKinney, in their Detroit headquarters, were some support for jazz, the big trend seemed to be to another kind of music.

By the early thirties, the other kind of music had taken over. Nichols was labeled as a recording artist. The colored bands, Brock and Duke and others excepted, played only for colored audiences in colored quarters. Guy Lombardo was the hottest thing in the country—perfectly good music couldn't be either. His sweeping orchestral rearrange, played to an also, usually

overwhelmingly sharp, were universally accepted as the "Secret of Music: The Sole of Heaven," which, as an identifying tag, should have been enough to confound it. Ben Boone and John Jones and Abe Lyman and Wayne King and Jim Garber and Benney Heisk were the big names. They had radio commercials, and their music, which in the case of Jones, at least, had commercial success, was hardly in the jazz groove. Hal Kemp, who had started out as a leader of a jazz band, switched to the smooth-rhythm school and made a reputation and a fortune. And what jazz there was seemed to be merely of the big-band school, screaming, badly played, with marchably hot rumps, that was *Rhythm* as he wrote and the popular Casa Loma band as its average. Cal Callaway, whose Duke had discovered, singing at the Plantation Club in 1929, was now leading the *Manhattan*. But Cal's music was not due to much of any high quality. It was exactly Cal's wild singing and dancing, his sleek, exaggerated Harlem dress. It was all pretty show-bizy. Such great jazz as there was seemed to be left behind. The future for Duke's type of music didn't look too good.

There was another worry. The men in the band were sort of prima donna. Never had there been such a distinguished collection of primaos in one band, and never was a collection of primaos so well aware of how distinguished they were. There were great shows of temperament, sultry disposition, lots of bewildering egotism. It was bewildering because these were Duke's old friends, his associates all the way back, most of them. It was bewildering because the band had jumped from what was really a collective organization to one led by a leader, a practice leader, by musical and vocal and psychological personality leaders. The band had made that jump with little to cushion the blow, to assuage the feelings of those left behind, still in the band but no longer equal to the leader. They were closer to Duke than other musicians to their bosses but they had been left alone and there were some hard feelings.

Duke's feelings of self-satisfaction and of vocal achievement, his delight in the establishment of a new family circle in New York and a balanced relationship with a girl he loved, these

things were severely spoiled by the worries. He worried about where his band stood in relation to the times, to these times and the years still to come. He worried about the delicate web of personalities and temperaments which tied his band together. He just plain worried.

"To sit still, Duke said to himself, for Europe. Europe is ahead. He looked forward to it as early 1933 as a distant patient with a new nerve looks forward to anesthesia. Europe, Duke said to himself, thank God for Europe.

"What about me?" Mildred asked.

"What about you?" Duke answered.

"Do I get to go along?"

Duke answered slowly. "No, baby, I'm afraid not. No, I guess we'd better not do that."

"What do you mean 'better not do that'?" Mildred asked.

"I mean God would punish me if I took you along, and so can't be," Duke answered. "It would be too much. Just having Europe now is so wonderful, starting you along too would be too much. I'm not meant to be that happy. Maybe nobody is. But I certainly know I'm not meant to be that happy."

CHAPTER TEN

HIGH LIFE

LONG AMERICANS HAD BEEN TO ENGLAND IN 1924, BUT HIS hadn't made a great impression. Just a good "nigger" band, the English said, using the word with some degree of patronization, but without any scornful edge. They wanted Duke with somewhat greater interest. He was presented in the spring of 1925 by a public advertising and publicity campaign organized by Jack Hyman, the bandleader promoter who was bringing the Ellington band to Europe. In the London papers and magazines, for weeks before Duke arrived, there was talk about the coming event. The *Morning Standard*, day before the band reached London, said:

Duke Ellington, "the popaller" of every jazz music and Harlem rhythm, arrives from America on his first visit to this great city to-morrow. London will be crowded by jazz-dance bandmen from all parts of the country for the purpose of hearing a demonstration by his band of 15 players of the latest dance music.

Certainly interest among musicians was high enough to bring good-of-theirs to London to hear Duke, but there is no record of any such concerted reaction of the states behind him. The "hot popaller" appellation was undoubtedly the work of a Hyman propaganda, and the description of the genre as "jazz jazz music" was probably occasioned by the fact that Ellington was looked for as an exponent of the Pullitzer, most famous for its so-called "sweety shows." The British temperament conceived of anything as far from the possible domains of everyday life as a slapstick comedian as "sweety."

There was some griping in the press about Hyman's not be-

ing allowed to play in America (because of marketing later union laws) and Ellington's being free to play in England. Hyman was in fact carrying the other cheek, as it was ingeniously chided by the Americans, or something. The other cheek was quickly withdrawn, however, when Duke returned to Europe, six years later. England had improved in her recent looks a few forbidding foreign performers who were not members of the English performing unions to appear in Great Britain. In any case, on that, his first trip, a warm welcome awaited him.

Cedric Belfrage in the *London Express* said, "This band, consisting of America's brightest hottest rhythm boys, all of whom are negroes (shown with a smile) as in England, so the considerable curiosity of the N.Y. is considered by experts to be the finest batch of negroes west of London Road." In discussing Ellington and jazz, the British writers achieved a procreative of phrase unattained in the field of negro criticism until two and a half years later when the "belting" laid his America.

An energetic, aggressive group of jazz writers, critics, editors, and Hyman and his associates obtained for Ellington one forty-five minute broadcast over the British Broadcasting Company National network at a time B.B.C. never thought to a band from a remote location, hood, night club or ballroom and had never before paid for dance-band performances except those played by its house orchestra, a pulled organization directed, at the time, by Henry Hall. Some newspapers made liberal comment about the payment to the band. The *Manchester Dispatch* headed:

This month (Jack Hyman) is bringing the American jazz king to England—Duke Ellington—for whom he has looked in an agreement at Broadcasting House at an unusually high fee, which reaches three figures. Trust an American to make every word!

And it was with a touch of more than ordinary machinery that Cedric Belfrage reported:

Ellington, you know, is an ordinary negro person. His all-white press agent describes him as "well-educated and grade-school" in his language.

Jules Hughes writes to me from New York declaring that "Ellington and Duke Ellington seem to be the only great men that America has produced without the help of the Jews."

"Is that so, it may?" Belfrage concluded cryptically, not letting his readers know whether he wanted Hughes' soul like marionettes in the chains of Duke's adoration more so than he as they may.

There was some resentment that the Pullmanian leaders couldn't find sufficient talent in Britain, "and that America is the only remaining source of material." Resentments, animosities, and disbelief. "They have lost the art of creating beautiful work," was the bitter comment of *The People*. "The material is there. But no one can develop it."

Along with the wide cracks and the poisonous pipes, however, there was enormous interest in Ellington, a genuine totem. Much was made in the British press of American American composer Percy Grainger's comparison of Ellington to Johann Sebastian Bach and to Frederick Delius. Delius was England's own, and a serious comparison of "America's cultured king of jazz," as many referred to him, and a contemporary English composer, by a musician like Grainger, was to be taken very seriously. The top London paper, the *Daily Express* and *Daily Herald*, not only covered the appearance of the band but gave Ellington great space before he arrived. His picture appeared in the *Herald*, *Illustrated News-Chronicle*, *Evening Standard* and *Sunday Express*. All over the country, newspapers, large and small, lauded his forthcoming appearance. The *News-Chronicle*, in a story announcing his arrival at London's Waterloo station, lauded Ellington as "the most celebrated negro band leader in the world." Perhaps they were thinking of Duke as another Jim Europe, the famous Negro ragtime band leader in the last war, whose big band drew was the first to introduce American jazz to Europe.

The trip over was not especially noteworthy. The band was found on board the 24 Olympic from the day it left New York, June 2, and it arrived in Southampton a half day after one week later. Freddie Guy, who had been teaching himself the differences in European and American jazz, on stage after

the fear of the lungs, had collected instruments. Everybody had drunk a lot, had a little. Toby recovering a little as he explained the incidents and handshakes of event on a transatlantic liner. The two girls with the troupe, Iva and Renee Dudley, a dancer, were lauded. There were some rehearsals.

At Southampton Jack Hylton met them, shook hands around and got everybody set for a series of pictures for the newspapers and the trade weekly, the *Melody Maker*. All the traditional class in the dock of the Olympic. Sailing, sailing, sailing second. Duke on the top deck, at the head of the stern, waving hello to England. They boarded the train for London and Duke met a crowd. He was welcomed to play and tonic.

"It was a terrible thing. I could never acquire a taste for that."

At Waterloo everybody was impressed. The boat train was full of diplomats of international renown going to the London Conference, one of the dozens of business men, naval party conditions which changed hostilities and phone space in the world's newspapers in their pairs. But the photographers shot Ellington and his bandmen, learned of the Ambassador from the United States, they took the country's just summer photography. The cameramen got set for poses.

"We posed back."

In London there were headlines. They weren't simply good first announcing the band's arrival. They were something different from what the cameramen had expected.

NO HOTEL FOR
A NEGRO BAND

JACK HYLTON
WILL
LEAD THEM

IF PLAYERS ARE
MIXED UP WANT
TO BEAT

PROBLEM FOR JACK
HYLTON

The story was unpleasant. "We hotel which is board eighteen negroes." "I cannot very well stand the juxtaposition in a hotel," said Jack Hyman, "though at the moment that seems to be the only solution. My staff have contacted the news and where to for rooms, and hotel."

The *Express* asked the question, "Is it possible for a negro to find accommodation in a first-class hotel in London?" A representative of the newspaper visited well-known London hotels and tried to book a room for a West African negro, as a test case.

"We are extremely sorry, sir, but we have not a single room vacant," was one reply.

"Hopefully full up . . . World Conference and Ascot, you know?" was another.

"We can put him up for one night, if he is well-behaved," was another.

"Is he very black?"

Another clerk explained the hierarchy. "There are blacks and blacks. The one with the nose and crinkly hair have less chance of entering rooms than any other type."

It was possible for a Negro to find accommodation in a first-class London hotel. Duke was booked at the Grosvenor, one of the city's finest and best-known hotels. But then, as one of the newspaper columnists summed him up, "He is not very black. He is a master of harmony. He wears a brown suit and a yellow tie that harmonizes with his skin." The British were perhaps more cynical about these American Negroes than prejudiced against them.

It was not possible for eighteen colored musicians, even of the stature of Ellington's men, to find similar accommodation. They were quartered in various Bloomsbury houses and rooming-houses, not away in the slums of London which corresponds to New York's Greenwich Village, where there is no color line and there is much freedom, of all kinds.

Duke made a quick change when he got to the Dorchester hotel hurried past Hyde Park in mindlessly clogged traffic to Jack Hyman's for a modest party. Everybody was there, col-

orists, conductors, musicians, "heavy conductors, heavy wind cars," as he called the big men in classical music who were there to do him professional homage. Tommy Girding, who wrote a marvellous column for the *Daily Express* under the signature of William Hickey, covered Duke.

"Duke?" Tommy asked, with a questioning tone.

"Mum," Duke answered, with official harmony bent to match the polite look on his face that indicated tolerance, interest perhaps, but certainly not conviction, overbored about any thing.

"Duke," Girding continued, "what is he?"

"Oh, hot," Duke repeated, "hot. Why hot is, er, hot is. Yes, hot is like a man. Hot is a part of music, like the rest is part of the rest, and the page and the leaves and the crumb, hot is to mean a man, a crank, a swing, a lead to go a note." Duke really felt "hot" was like the talk or blarney of a man, an after-thought, that he felt the distinction was too difficult to make. "Why, in England," he noted, "Mum Judge is hot . . ."

Duke's Duke's "big" Duke, perhaps, but he was depressed. He did understand that there was something different about his music and the way it was written. He glanced something of Duke's working routine and the atmosphere that surrounded him from their conversation together and on a column written a few days later he explained that "Ellington decides speaking figuratively while he is composing" that "he composes hot as fire as it is the morning" that he didn't get up at that early hour to write but hadn't retired yet, that he would when play words after work until the next noon, then going to bed before lunch time he "reported to Harlem as going to bed early."

Hyman's party, most of England that was interested in the concert and many of its people who were not, were fascinated with this man and his bizarre world, where the floors were carpeted and the very atmosphere merged with an unusual creativity. They were amazed that from America, from "Harlem," as they insisted on spelling New York's Negro quarter, where everybody was so blatantly distinguished and the life was so profoundly close to a marvellous degeneration, such courtly manners could

come. "He is quiet, friendly and deferential. When introduced to anyone he bows from the waist. He has a charming smile and placid eyes." "A pleasant cultured man," An editorial in the *African* continued. Duke is a representative of the colonies in the House of Commons. A good sample, a dignified representative of England's westland.

Hyland's house was a Mayfield straphouse, a ramshackle old building, long, low-roofed and partitioned in black and white boards. Very lavishly furnished apartments and at this cocktail party for Duke a great show of West End people. The dance stood open from six that evening until nine as people flowed in to meet Ellington. The *Melody Maker* was covering the party and was impressed by Duke's "wonderful and rare ability of making every single person to whom he spoke feel that that person was the most important in the room."

At nine Duke was rushed over to Broadcasting House with Jack Hyland and ten minutes after the hour the orderly reading of news headlines was interrupted to put the two men on the air. A new kind of Duke spoke to England. All of liked, the conversation was so relaxed as none at the time at Hyland's reception. They discussed Duke's music and his musical aims. Duke ended the program with solemn and honest affirmation of a fact.

"I am of little value," he said, "without my band."

The Doctor was "overwhelmed," Duke says. He moved from one room to another. "It took them from four o'clock in the morning until seven that evening to find out I had moved." They didn't notify Duke of a change in program at the Palladium, where he was to open his first Monday in London, so he was late for the first show. He came on in time to make a hero. The audience had been made sufficiently impatient by the late placing of the band on the variety bill, themselves, but the smooth pacing of the band's show appeased them and they didn't seriously miss the absent leader.

Duke's Palladium program provoked severe criticism from his most ardent English fans, who wanted to hear *After Eight* and *Blue Rondo* and *Four Doors* and *Circle Rhapsody*, music that was less theory than what he did play but more legitimate.

they felt, more fully representative of the band. They did let down by the presence at the head of the bill of Bessie Bailey, a lip-sucking dancer, and the top team of Bailey and Berley. But they did acknowledge that "the band was perfect in every note it played." And the audience at the Palladium were wildly enthusiastic, provided their applause at such length the line stretched through Stoney Weather as soon as the intensity of their looking and the warmth of their appreciation.

King Don Jolly and *Three Little Words* opened the program. The *Amos 'n' Andy* film had reached England, and Duke, installed in this point of commercial usage (Irving Mills was with him on the trip, wasn't missing an obvious opportunity like song Stoney Weather and one of the bright points of double-revolver patter which soon became standard stage stuff for him, *Give Me a Girl Like That*). The audience roared at the reports of Scamp's interpolated comments on first's show man Bessie Bailey danced but the Ellington fans shielded their eyes to pay better attention to what the band was playing, the long-haired *Breaker 'n' Ripper*, which they knew as well from records. The *Whispering Tiger* was next, a passionate version of *Tiger Rag*. Duke had learned the value of understated dynamics since his recording of *The Mystery Song* in 1935, in which the number's theme was made mysterious by the way it was first stated—in soft, way down. Black and Ten Penny kept the mood open and restrained, with an added touch of the hysterical. Then Freddy Jackson stepped on to sing *Swamp*, guard, and song, danced and transported his way through the catchy song which Sophie Tucker had made an unsuccessful success. Some of *Three Days Easy* scored. Whether he was the audience wanted him to return to his own or least more cynical and down in the background and carry his responsible trumpet section lead. Then the familiar strains of *Black Is Beautiful* showed enough attention to quiet the chafed spectators and bring the program to a properly triumphant conclusion.

Duke remained at the Palladium for two weeks, selling out at each performance and getting all the response he and Mills

would have wished for from the press. Even the *Times* allowed some of the excitement to creep into its review of the show. From the heights of its restraint it pressed close: "Mr Duke Ellington . . . is exceptionally and remarkably efficient in his own line. He does it alone and with an apparently easy show of mastery what a jazz band constantly does with difficulty or fails to do. And the excitement and contribution of the nerves which are raised by the performances of his orchestra are the more dispelling by reason of his complete control and precision. It is not an easy but a skilfully apprehended of measured and dramatic attitude. . . . The expert, who could disregard their emotional effect," the *Times* recorded, "might also readily derive an artistic enjoyment from his rhythms. But the ordinary listener probably does not and is probably not interested to do so: it is enough that the effect should be immediate and intense."

The broadcast from the BBC studio caused considerable controversy. There was no reluctance to display its cheap, and no room, doubtless, for dyspeptic comment such as the *Daily Mail's* musing up of the effect of Ellington on England, a gross error "even that the Russian Defeat at its best . . . The primitive raw quality of his playing seems to have found an answering chord in the sensibility of youth." There were other protests, however, letters to papers all over the country, such as one to the *London Daily Echo* in which the writer thought "that in view of the present state of unemployment in this country the BBC could do much better by employing British artists, as it is with British money that the BBC is made possible." Some scolding papers were displeased. The *Manchester Guardian*, traditional Liberal voice of the British press, was staunchly conservative, if not reactionary, in its review of the Duke's broadcast: "When all arguments are finished it is surely true to say that something that is thoroughly ugly from start to finish is hard to be opposed. Even the 'music' would be more horrible if the words were not so stupid and if the ideas which came vaguely behind it were not so patently crude." The wonder is that the *Guardian* reviewer granted the coherence of a train of ideas

in Ellington's world. Under the heading of "Enough Said," a reviewer in the *Yorkshire Observer* summed up the bad feelings: "Duke Ellington I suffered for 15 min. and then worked off. Give me Henry Hall every time."

It is hard to understand just what offended these reviewers. The broadcast on June 12 was an impressive review of the talent by which the Ellington band had made its first reputation among hot fans and with the larger whitey public. And it took *Swingin' On, Lightnin', Goodies Love Call, Old Man Blues, East River, Lamentation Blues, New Women* (especially composed for and dedicated to Crown Henry, a blacklisted melody, *Jealousness Lady, It Don't Mean a Thing* and a few pop tunes out of Ellington's notebook, headed by *I've Got the World on a String, Mind Juggle*, establishing the reader of all the programs on the European tour, was the finale. An engineer's tale of the Ellington people brought the program to a close on a charming sound. There was an abundance of good music on the forty-five-minute broadcast, very little odd, and, judging from the favorable comments of radio reviewers in general, it was a well-balanced airing carefully monitored by the BBC engineers in charge to capture the strange sounds of the exotic organization.

Most of the response to the broadcast was favorable. The BBC's weekly newspaper, *Radio Times*, called a full column with interview comment, almost all of it enthusiastic, some of it frank with real interest in the bands' live *Melody Maker* concert, on Sunday evening, June 15, was packed to capacity by the broadcast. There was wide debate on the merits of the orchestra and upon the particular value of the so-called commercial numbers.

After the concert, given at the Trocadero Cinema, discussion was not nearly so sharp. It led to talk of such bitterness that one of it gave the new anti-Ellington club with Patrick "Spiky" Hughes at its head. The concert had stirred out in Ellington's mind as "the real, the true Ellington—no commercial endings at all." But half way through the program Duke decided against that pure procedure. The audience, he could see, was lost on

the ten numbers. "But on the show numbers they sit back and and when do we get started." For the second half of the concert, "I went back and gave a wonderful show with the E & E and tape thrown in." (E & E are the initials of Eubie and Kate, owners of the leading chain of theaters in the Chicago area and famous for the elaborateness of their stage shows, each of their orchestral numbers ends with a code stick with double and flourish.) As a side attraction, Hughes and the other critics, amateurs and professional, gave Ellington hall.

"That isn't you," they said, as if they really knew.

"Three people wanted something and I gave it to them," Duke said.

"You want show independence," the critics sneered.

"If they don't go for my high powered jive," Duke answered, "then I'm going to lay down a hole steam for them."

"You have no spirit of independence," the critics returned, in an appeal to Ellington's American patriotism.

Jack Hyland and his wife sided with Duke, but they were "commercial," of course, and they, like Hyland and Duke, lost the argument. At the next Melody Maker concert, three weeks later, the audience was presented with entertainment by Spike, whom Ellington called the "Hot Machine." When Tricky Sam plays you mean's laugh, was the gist of Hughes' direction: it's not and no applause in the middle of numbers. The audience didn't laugh, but Duke did, shaking about the wings which Spike had thrown about Tricky's playing and the reason for it. This was Duke's farewell appearance in England and the crowd that turned out listened with rapt attention to the program, carefully impressed by Spike and very satisfactory to that particular gentleman. Under the "Mile" alias he reported in the following week's Melody Maker that he enjoyed himself "so much last Sunday that there is very little for me to say on the way of criticism. . . . If a couple of thousand people have learned within three weeks that Duke and Tricky are really expressing something extremely personal and moving, then there is indeed some hope that these same people will realize, by the time Duke gives another concert, that applause during the performance of a

piece of music is not done in the best clothes." He rather wished that the stack of gasoline which Freddy Jackson suffered during the poison had drenched his spine, because "hours of his music were most distressing. . . . There is a time and a place for everything, but the mixed form passages of this piece are not an occasion for the waving of hands and such. The Sunday afternoon, in England, the stage is not a stage, but a concert platform, when it isn't a pulpit." After a remarkably personal and severe in which Spike card while "mean me" and indicated what did not, he ended with another reminder of audience discipline. "E-E," he said. "Remember about the applause next time, won't you?"

Between concerts, the band toured England: Birmingham, Bolton, Liverpool, Blackpool, a number of theater dates and one or two dances, arranged by Hyland. In Liverpool, the band and the audience were surprised by a visit from the Prince of Wales, who was in town on his way to the international golf competition for the Ryder Cup at Southport. The Prince and his party took their place in the front of the main, front row of the main (backroom), in the middle of one of the early turns on the bill and remained through to the end of the show. He requested one or two numbers which the band played with pleasure. "We played like mad." The musicians were all so set up by the presence of the Prince that "we didn't know when to stop." Finally, they played *The King (and Queen)* "very successfully."

"I am very sincere about *The King*," Duke says.

When Duke got to Scotland to play a week at the Empire Theatre in Glasgow, just after his first concert in London, he found eager reporters anxious to know all about him and his music, men who had read every word printed in the London papers and thought he would be good copy.

"Some people say that my music is uncorrect," he told Glasgowites, "and without them a great complementation of British character which never has and never will mean anything at all but what, may I ask you as business, do the same people think about happy music?" He twinkled.

"My contention about the music we play," he continued, "is that it is also folk music, the music of our transposition as American and the expression of a people's soul just as much as the wild dancing of happiness denotes a basic race that has never known the yoke of foreign domination."

Duke warmed to the subject. "There is an inherent feeling for wild music in Scottish music and there is a definite relationship between the rhythms of folk and the Highland fling and the mambo I play."

He spoke of "the fury with which people have attacked me through the press and personal letters," named several examples of choice invective and made metaphors which had been leveled at him, and then answered "one gentleman" who wanted to know why his music was called "hot music." But then, Duke said, "So do I. My music isn't 'hot music.' It is essentially Negro music, and the observations of anthropologists." After his trip to England, for many years Duke called his work "Negro music," declining to have it classified as 'hot' or 'jazz' or 'swing' or any other unimportant name which might be given it.

As were the English, the Scots were impressed with his dress and his manner, "at the public school quality—or better." The press devoted to him in the Glasgow papers was large, and universally receptive articles filled it.

Musicians, in the London papers, the controversy over the Ellington band spread from the gossip columns and the distant reviewers to the dignified pages of the music critics. Such comments as the old Bruce Newman and the young Constant Lambert noted their positions. Newman was not pleased. In a memorable phrase, he termed Duke "a Harlem Giuseppe Verdi on half-baking liquor." Lambert, a vigorous and talented composer himself (See *Grande*), did not censure Newman directly. But several of his pieces in the *Radio Times* and the *Sunday Referee* came right to the point. Their directness and their freedom from moral or pigmyish prejudice gave them distinction. The logic of Lambert's musical analysis added critical conviction. He summed up for the defense:

The orchestration of nearly all the modern dance an in-

steadily renewed interest, and after hearing what Ellington can do with fourteen players in person this Joe Thompson and Wood Jackson, the average modern, first-rate who splashes about with biggy players in the Rungt's manner, even had a little changed. All this is clearly apparent to anyone who visits the Palladium, but what may not be so apparent is that Ellington is no mere band-leader and arranger, but a composer of music that, more, probably the first composer of real character to come out of America.

Until Duke left England, the controversy was confined to the clubs and weeklies. Stanley Nelson kept up a peppy discussion of the aphoristic qualities of Ellington's music in *The Era*.

ELLINGTON—AND AFTER

ART OF DERIVATION

MUSIC OF REVOLT

And then another "SCROOPHOPH" AND SM. Nelson said that he refused to go along with Fiedel on the slaps of sexual desire and stimulation and made a serious distinction between the reactions of listeners and the intent of composers. He contended that Ellington's music "possesses as much of variety of appeal as even the *Blues*." Not denying that "music has well-defined limits with us," he added that he had little doubt that many musicians had been successful because of "their sensitive qualities in the physical sense." He told the story of James Hinkley, famous American music critic only in this country. "Who, after a recital by Fiedel in New York, went round counting the number of men in the hall affected by the emotion of the organum."

In an article in *New Artists*, critic John Christie gave Duke credit for creating a new system much like that introduced in later years by Benny Goodman and then to Frank Sinatra. The members of the audience "at each week, gasp, gaggle their eyes and jig their knees to the rhythm . . . [play] hard to be psycho-analyzed." Recalling a quotation from Ellington, he was wroth:

Ellington

— The characteristic melodic motif of my race has been forged from the whitest of our nerves, and from our propensities after something complete in the gratification of our lives in the early days of our American occupation.

Cherrie

Now I agree that the "melancholy" of the Negro Spiritual is an expressive form, before it was imbedded in musical arrangements, was a significance and moving thing. . . . But it is inherent in me to be told that a bunch of highly paid, over-sophisticated jazz players, when seated at tables entirely European in atmosphere, are concentrating on such trivial issues as their beards. Well, Ellington said, today I agree that Duke Ellington's delicious blues have the same to do with the business of Copacabana than the folk's blues with the Delia of the Spanish Armada.

Cherrie hoped, he said, that the quotation was "the work of a non-authoritative press agent, to whom we may also owe the statement that in America Duke Ellington has been seriously compared with Bach and Debussy." Wrong on both hopes, of course. Duke actually did say that he believed his music came from the Negro's sorrowful past. Percy Gessinger really had compared him to Bach and Debussy in a lecture at New York University. Cherrie was willing to accept the Debussy comparison because of the parent similarity of chords and progressions of the two composers. He rejected Bach. "The only thing the two composers have in common is a complete rhythmic presence. It were asensible to compare a gramophone with the historical Chaucer."

Whether or not Ellington's music is in any way comparable to that of Bach or Debussy, lesser than the former's, greater than the latter's, perhaps, or incomparably different, as different as jazz transpires from Spanish baroqueism, is all beyond this story. But Cherrie's discovery of total antithesis in Duke's music is highly questionable. Ellington did not and could not claim that his music represented something in his blood, something he was born with that took musical shape almost auto-

matously. He was talking of the culture of his people, a culture shaped by years of servitude and of irreparable sorrow, of a melody of a people that is beyond criticism if you know the people. Surely the joy and the sophistication of the performers are not germane against a sadness they see all about them and inherit along with the color of their skins. It isn't a universal melancholy: it is in the world about them and it is all more impossible for a Negro to live without it. There are not Negroes when they laugh, it is not through tears, but rather in observation with their indignant humanity. And if at times this interchanging of tears and laughter presents the bloody aspect of a Negro's life it is because this would be made such citizens of its dark-skinned environment. To their glory they have made high art of this uncertain pleasure in fantasy, something more than can be said for Leonardo's *dream beauty*.

From every point of view, Duke made exciting jazz during his trip to England. Whimsical moments passed and returned, they advanced and receded his music. The small British were left with a deep interest for jazz and for the man they accompanied in high price. Some mounted pulpits, real or imaginary, to condemn the music of Ellington when given a place beside that of the three of traditional music. His impact upon the musical consciousness was deep and indelible. It is still with them.

As the poem gave itself over to lengthy discussion of the virtues and defects of his music and to hurriedly rendered in the opinion of the American Duke, so did briefly convey his own. There was the first critical party thrown by Jack Hyman, and a reciprocal one.

Mr. Irving Mills and Mr. Duke Ellington
express the pleasure of the company of

at a
Catalina Ferry
at 3 p.m., Friday, July 19th
to the
Park Hotel, Dordrecht Hotel, N. J.
on the occasion of a
Presentation to Mr. Jack Hyman
Dordrecht Hotel, Park Lane, N. J.

NAACP

Randomly pressed each on its subject mentioned the party. An *unpublished* event pressed three American hosts and witnessed the exchange of illustrations between Ellington and Hyatt.

There was the party thrown by the occasional members of French Club, at the Myster House in London's West End. Duke and the band played at the party, and the newspaper pages of the Sunday supplement and the social pages of the magazine noted the elegants of British society, the characters out of Evelyn Waugh. Lord and Lady and the Marquis of Knapton arrived in *Mind* today, then came dancing in *Refracted* Lady "A Sprunged Home" the *Synodist* called it "French Club parties are more exclusive than the Royal Exchange," the *Daily Express* captioned to its readers from the lower world and added that its beautiful people get invitations to a room that usually holds three hundred—and they all come. A Duke was a greater draw than a Marquis at that night. The King's cousin, an important gossip writer and Irving Mills were almost refused admittance, and the gossip columns were open-mouthed. The space between the lines were bigger than usual. "I saw many elegant dresses—and many colored hats," one wrote "There was the loveliest hat Marquis of Knapton. And, of course, Duke Ellington and his band."

But the big party was Lord Bessborough's, a party given for the Prince of Wales. "We were very up," Duke says, "looking rather. They were serving nothing but wine at night long—good social, too." For every drink served the guests, there was one for the band. "I had a rich feeling," Duke remembers, "playing piano and posing."

A slight looking man came up to Duke, bent over the piano and asked a question.

"What?" Duke replied.

"Would you play *Swampy River*?" he repeated.

"You know how it is," Duke answered, "I never play piano solo. You know how it is."

The man left, but soon returned to ask for *Swampy River* again. He was persistent. So was Duke.

"I never do solo," Duke explained patiently. "The solo are for the boys in the band."

The slight man departed and Irving Mills caught Duke's eye.

"Kaiser who that was?"

"No."

"Then was Prince George?"

Duke took an even long gulp of his drink, "a deep breath of wine." Then he heard his name mentioned, and there in the middle of the floor was the Prince of Wales speaking about him. A long eulogy, an extravagant speech. He was impressed with Duke. Needless to say, the Duke was impressed with the Prince. After the speech the Prince approached him.

"Won't you have a drink with me?" Windsor asked Ellington.

"Delighted." They found their way to the bar together.

"What are you drinking, Duke?" Edward asked Edward.

"Whisky, gin."

"I'll have the same." (Up to that time Duke had always thought gin was a sort of low drink. "Since that time," he says, "I've always felt rather grand when I drink gin.")

Before many drinks had passed, Duke knew both Princes at the party and Prince George came over to play some piano with Duke. Then the Prince of Wales turned to Sonny.

"Sonny," he said, "how'd you like me to show you how to play around?"

"It's all yours, Take over," he said, and bowed. The Prince returned the bow.

"Good Franklenny stuff, I'll bet," Sonny whispered to Duke, the two players. He decided differently, though, when the Prince had played a set with the band. "Good low drama," Duke said, and he moved on.

Just before leaving England, the band learned to devote motion to its one record date. Ellington's contract with Brunswick had expired with its last recording session before leaving New York and his new one with Victor was not yet in force, so the Decca group was feasible. But there were's much time, and when something went wrong with the machines, turning

out several masterful passages, they had to be content with only one master for the last record, Chicago, which was not just unorthodox but dangerous as once something happened to it. The only set piece in the station was *Norfolk Spauld*, which the band had done at its last American date. The others, Chicago, *Don't Misbehave!* and *Hyde Park*, were all local arrangements, sequences of solos with roughed backgrounds. Hyde Park was based on the chords of several songs and first was named *First Lane*, after the street bordering Hyde Park on which the Decca Street Band was housed; it was advertised under its first title in Paris, where the band got there, but its very name was relinquished in favor of the less chic but better known home of England's no-place errors. The record sounded more like reliable public than like the stolen samples of Duke's recent friends.

Frank George wanted to be on on the record date, but at the last minute Scotland Yard wonned his plans: too many people knew about his coming, they said, and they would not be responsible. The band had a hell, anyway, leading up at the last dance party, his balls (after which Spike Hughes coined his best known jazz composition, *Six Ball's Champagne*), before going into the studio. "By the time we got to Chicago, the last of the sales, we didn't know whether we were in Chicago or Egypt."

The band stayed high in Paris. There were three concerts, one at the famous Salle Pleyel in Paris, on successive Saturdays, July 21 and 22, and "enfin avant de s'envoler pour l'Amérique, Duke Ellington et son premier Orchestra donnèrent leur dernière concert en Europe, dimanche soir 23 juillet, au Casino de Montmartre." The rest of the time, the boys partied. They refashioned old tunes, and, besides, overjoyed to see all her Washington and New York friends again, there a terrific ball for the band. Most impressive moment of the evening was the carrying of the huge champagne bottle, rather than any of the business, so big it had to be held by four women. The sports that was more that night.

Paris was ready for Duke. A few years earlier the city

gushed over, Henri Franchini, the French opposite number of the London Times' Bruce Newman, had written his impressions of the band in *La Revue musicale*:

Duke Ellington ne fait qu'un avec ses musiciens. Avec ses cordes, avec ses bois, avec ses cuivres et ses percussions, il dirige en moyen des mouvements de corps. Il est plus que le chef, c'est un être qui s'efface des musiciens et de la musique. (Derrière les sons, le corps, la construction (difficile comme l'écriture) et les tendances. Ainsi l'orchestre peut être invisible. Peut-être une action si vive en passant. L'emploi de ses sections qui agissent à l'extérieur de l'orchestre afin de grandes masses, surtout à l'un et sur des solistes. On peut ajouter à tout cela les effets de la "prospective," par exemple, lorsqu'on annonce la fin d'un morceau de la musique et de l'accompagnement. Les conclusions sont tout à fait étranges.

The French musicians who worked in the mode of tradition were bedazzled by the instrumentation of the Ellington band, by the sheer volume of Duke's writing, by the tenor of his sound. Like Franchini, they concentrated on the swing of the band, and noted their amazement at the great resources the four men, six brass and four rhythm provided. "The musicians were exhausted."

Franchini and others were amazed, too, at Duke's much-reported insistence that he would not read Rimsky-Korsakov's *Toccata on Harnsey*, which had been sent him, or any other heavy concert item. "Il avait que le musique a parlé de se faire devant qu'en la musique on les formules," Franchini explained, "et maintenant il a joué en plus sans pour le quitter de l'impression collective." The French, engaged in the production and appreciation of the most heavy classical music of our day, did at Ravel and Debussy, Mahler and Bart, were more than merely tolerant of Ellington's jazz. They were delighted to hear the original music which had been noticed so often by "Les Ins," Minkus, Honegger, Prokofiev, Gershwin, Tchaikovsky, Aaron and Louis Dancy. They were delighted to hear original music.

The large numbers of hot jazz enthusiasts in Paris were, of

comes, overwhelmed by the presence in their city of their old, Huguenot friends and Charles Deffenry, whose writings formed the basis of the European Jean movement, were in constant attendance upon the hotel and showed Duke such of Paris as Brindley and her associates did not know or care to show. From all over the nearby countries, Ellington's customers came to hear the hotel, from Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland, from Germany. There were the foreign jour journalists to tell the coming and go of the customers and the *Jeannot* in Holland, *Alphonse* in Belgium, *Jean* in Switzerland, *Jean Tanguy* Derriving in France (France had not yet started his magazine, *Alot* Jean), *Maxim* Duke in Germany. These Jean journals had scattered by some years the serious apprehensions of the art in this country in magazines of its own. Their followers turned up in order even here in Paris during Ellington's week there.

The hotel sailed from France on the *Alphonse*, everybody well loaded. Duke was carried along on champagne and brandy ("That is the most glorious glow—and good for watchmen"). Somebody commented on how drunk Duke was.

"Not drunk," Duke explained, "just unworried. That's the way to travel the ocean. You must go on board right, with no worries, no weight on your mind. Then take a stew and it goes easy, it goes on as justice."

Just as he had hoped, the *Alphonse* trip had proved a busy, happy time for Duke. For him it was one long ball. With the unobtrusive attitude of the publicly-working gentleman, "I don't care what you say about me as long as you spell the name right," he had provoked as much controversy and won as much newspaper magazine space as English channel swimmers, winners of the *Lacrosse Nationale* and swimmers, and over a much longer period than those three-day wonders. And more men of the new country was honored and Duke's participation in the national radical discussion entirely correct, the space had been well won. He graciously didn't care what people said about him, though he did want more than his name spelled right: he wanted his ideas presented properly. He could not have gained more recognition toward this end if he had bought the space.

There was some disappointment among the boys in the hotel, a restrained bitterness about the history of which the world knew. However, they couldn't help being flattered by the men whose attention they had been paid their every recorded note and by the way their facemaps were dogged by French admirers all over England, and again in Paris and Brussels. And for all the contagion of American's perfection, which had carried to some degree overseas, the general attitude of the English and French had been one of warm friendship toward the Americans. No matter what the disappointments, Europe left the Ellington revolution with almost as much self-confidence as Duke himself felt. Duke put it positively, if somewhat melodramatically, "The main thing I got in Europe was spirit; it lifted me out of a bad groove. That kind of thing gives you courage to go on. If they think I'm that important," Duke mused, "then maybe I have kinds and something, maybe one main idea means something."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

DALLAS DOINGS

1 "WON'T GO SOUTH," DUKE HAD SAID, MANY TIMES.

"I don't care what they offer me," he told Irving Mills.

They offered a lot of money. Duke turned down one-night fees of \$500, which was very big money in the thirties and got no small ones today. But Duke didn't want to go South. He didn't like the thought of going down where his people had been so miserably treated, where the treatment was still so bad, where Negroes were lynched and, like "Unsubduable," set in the back of buses and trolley cars and treated as special Jim Crow sections. He didn't want to play in ballrooms and theaters where the colored people would be forcibly separated from the whites.

When Duke returned from Europe, however, some of his objections to the South had been dropped. He was no longer a stranger to segregation; he was willing to experiment at almost anything. His spirit was sufficiently buoyed by that European trip, by the magnificent reception abroad, so that even the South seemed a real possibility. Mills got to work and turned up with a lucrative trip through Texas for the autumn of 1933. It was an epochal journey. It was the first complete tour of Southern homes in the Texas territory by a Negro band. And with the shorter tour, dances were booked, some white, some colored, some mixed (though separated by balcony or screen from a direct contact).

Dallas, Texas, went wild. Long before Duke arrived in the big city, its newspapers were filled with stories about Ellington and his ensemble. It was like England all over again. There were the routine stories, announcing the booking of the band

DALLAS DOINGS

151

for the Majestic Theatre for a week's engagement with such ordinary billing for Eric Anderson, "well known blues singer," and Snake-Hips Tucker, "primitivist dancer." Bessie and Duke, the dancers who accompanied Duke on the European tour, Jess Cryer, a singer, and Sonny Green. These were great stronger headlines in the white as well as the Negro newspapers.

DUKE ELLINGTON, ONCE BOOMER, SLIPPED INTO MUSIC BUCKET

AMERICA'S "HOT AMBASSADOR" TO VISIT DALLAS THIS WEEK-END

DUKE ELLINGTON TO INVADE DALLAS

DUKE ELLINGTON-DUKE NEXT SATURDAY

MAJESTIC MAKES SPECIAL PREPARATION FOR ELLINGTON

Great black banners across the top of amusement page of Dallas newspapers, headlines accompanied, as often as not, by pictures of Duke, pictures of a size and dignity with the headlines. Negroes were very rarely seen in Dallas or any other Texas newspaper. The *Dispatch* reproduced from the news sheet, *Black and Tan Fantasy*, a shot of pants and hands on the background and Duke's shadow large in the background. It seemed to fit the caption, "Thinky Player of White Melodians," it showed the necessity of printing his picture in that paper.

The *Dispatch* also used pictures to great effect. Duke's photograph, one of Duke alone, one of Eric and Duke and a characterist shot, in this strange arrangement, there no relation to anyone in the band. The *Dispatch* ran the death of Ellington right underneath a photo of Carole Lombard, whose movie, *Brig Nament*, was being shown with Duke's songs shown at the Majestic. The juxtaposition of white and colored, even if the latter were concerned, was an innovation in Texas.

The *News* printed a close up of Duke's hands at the piano.

with the band, "Another Pair of Hands in Hoggery" and the opinion, "The square palms and spindling fingers of Duke Ellington are gaining a certain immortality in the field of jazz, a field that grows narrower and more in critical sense."

There were scores on "Duke's Jam Glossary," a rather fault-finding sketch of the verbal status of jazz gleaned from William Hobson's article in *Fortune* of that year 1939. Introducing Duke Ellington, there were others outlining the history of the band and its triumphs at the Roanock and Genoa Clubs and before European royalty. As in England, Perry Chase's comparison of Duke with Bach and Debussy was given wide airing. Duke, though not a native son as he was in England, had lived in Florida, and he was better known in the South than other contemporary British composers. The comparison was well made for Texas appearances.

References to Duke were not always as laudatory as a Negro band, but Texas readers were not to forget the value of his skin or his musicisms. "Ducky" was the adjective used in one used over and over again: "Ducky compositions." "The ducky Duke Ellington." "Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway own the two most famous negro [sic] bands in the world and both ducky instead of dark skinned."

When the band finally made its appearance, the newspapers were out of their way to give its stage show great space and thorough reports. Their enthusiasm was unbounded. Under heads about the "Greatest Band of Today," "Harlem's Answer to Rhythm," "Greatest Jam Band Today Leads Groups Into Chorus," they lauded the Ellington organization. "Elling was it by far the greatest player of jazz among all the players today." "It was a great show. . . ." "Duke Ellington does not possess the occasional showmanship of Cab Calloway, who brought the first big negro band to the Majestic theatre last spring. . . . [and] his stage show . . . is a much better show than that presented by Calloway. His band is far superior to Calloway's." Comparisons between Duke and Cab were inevitable. Close friends, the one discredited by the other, they were each other's closest rivals in the decade between 1930 and 1939.

Again there was the intense audience reaction. "At moments when the band got really 'hot' the audience was wailed into a frenzy. A symphony of tapping feet, humming voices and clapping hands permeated the Majestic."

Dallas turned out to have the same so highly prized by its newspaper writers. All records for the theatre were broken. Two dances, one white and one colored, had been scheduled for the Ice Palace. An additional one was set at the Baker Hotel. Foxcock Terrace, Dallas' premier dance spot, the night of his last show at the Majestic. Into the early hours of Sunday morning, Dallas citizens danced to the music of "the greatest of jazz bands," a Negro orchestra. " . . . Our grandfathers would have given any odds as to the respectability of his appearance," one Dallas writer noted. Another, interviewing Duke just before he left Dallas, reported on the arrangements made for quaffing beer and his musicians: Duke lived as an apartment on Cobble Street, "where with a rented piano he works on new compositions . . . Ellington's musicians, several of whom are accompanied by their wives, live in private negro homes or in apartments during the engagements at the Majestic and also in other Southern cities." This same writer reported on Duke's projected "negro music . . . five parts . . . [which] will trace negro music from its source in the African jungle." He quoted Duke directly and fairly, through Duke's concluding words were strong for a white newspaper in this decade: "I shall look into the future for the fifth and last movement, probably a hundred years from now, and give a recapitulation, an apotheosis tending to put the negro in a more comfortable place among the people of the world and a return to something he lost when he became a slave."

Dallas had been interested in everything Duke did as well, where and how he and his constant band. It was the same all over again in Fort Worth, near by Texas metropolis, which had been infested with the Ellington dances while Duke was playing Dallas. The same articles, many of them, or rough paraphrases of the Dallas originals, appeared in the Fort Worth papers. And the people responded all over again. "Wherever the

band played in the boulevard, on the Esplanade district, the Duke pattern was repeated. Duke's fans for his people in the South, though hardly prominent, were pulled in the front.

In spite of the good treatment he'd had, Duke was fearful to be approached by interviewers was a Missouri radio station. The announcer called him Mister Ellington. Duke thought he detected an ironic edge in the salutation.

"Mister Ellington," the announcer asked him, after they were on the air, "how do you compare your music, what procedure do you follow, Mister Ellington?"

And later, "Mister Ellington, what is your own favorite of all the music you have written?"

Racism questions were mixed with a few that seemed as pointed as the Mister. There were questions about the luxury of his Harlem home, his residence in a hotel, his large number of records. Was the announcer, with his Mister and his detailed picture of the financial and racial and sexual success of the "Night" Duke Ellington, suggesting that Duke had no right to his success, that no Negro had a right to any such success?

By the time the interview was over and he and the announcer had exchanged a few informal words, Duke decided he had been wrong. The announcer was genuinely respectful, he was genuinely interested in Duke's music and personality and habits of living. Duke made a few more adjustments in his thinking about the South. There were still more to come.

A trip to New Orleans a year later brought Duke South again. This time the band traveled in two railroad cars of its own, because no matter how much better the South would now than it had in Duke's mind before his firsthand experience down there, he had seen little demonstration of racial color lines and he did not want to have to hunt for accommodations in some back-of-the-curve store. A baggage car held their instruments and the band's music, a sleeping car held the regular crew. The cars were rolled into the New Orleans station, pushed onto a siding and the band had a home for the duration of its stay.

The first thrill in the day before the beyond was the reception for Barney. Barney Bigard was a native son, New Orleans own, and New Orleans remembered. A large crowd came to meet the band, looked up into smaller contingents which huddled around their favorite musicians. Then the great mass of the people surged forward as they saw Barney.

"How yeh, man?" they asked the clarinetist.

"That's not Barney," they yelled.

"Barney for Barney," they cheered.

Barney was escorted through the streets of New Orleans. He was followed wherever he went in the past quarter, close to all New Orleans, where he and most of the other famous New Orleans jazz men had played. The home town boy had made good.

In New Orleans, too, a children's club, an all-white organization of youngsters, demonstrated fervent support of Duke and his music without a moment's attention to differences in color or background, without prejudice. Duke was deeply touched.

Duke was in New Orleans as he had been in New York, Chicago, and points West, in London and Glasgow and Paris. He discovered a few clubs that ranked with the best he'd had in Europe or New York or Chicago. He discovered that the reputation New Orleans enjoyed as a great swing city was well deserved. He discovered parties, palace balls, parties of it, New Orleans fashion, insistence on the soft-shell, chicken or lamb, chicken of some other meat, shrimp and rice, covered with a very thin but very hot sauce. Duke ordered it by the pot. When he left New Orleans, he took a pot with him. He had to have some on the train. He walked down on the train carrying a basket of gumbo, good Creole gumbo, in front of him. Always a block from the station he noticed that there was a huge crowd gathered. He wondered what was up. A few steps further and he saw. Spotting a line of his bandstand's form, he noticed that the crowd was down across the Ellington crew all, the crowd was down on knees. He looked at himself. He was in sloppy sports attire, his stomach back on his head, hair up, carrying a pot of gumbo, he looked like a happy worker on a day off. He

couldn't face the crowd that way. He decided to walk all the way around the train and come in by the last car.

Arrived at the last car, Duke tried to open the door. Locked. He walked around the other side, tried that door. Locked. He rapped on the door. No answer. He banged. No answer. He looked at the door with his feet. Finally a scream came from within.

"Go away, man, go!"

"What you mean, go?" Duke screamed back. "It's me!"

"Me what?" the scream yelled.

"Duke, Duke!" Duke screamed frantically, as he heard some young men come dashing down to his end of the train.

The crowd opened the door just in time. Duke made an unconscious run from New Orleans, but he didn't spot the gleaming signpost by and he never had made upon the people of the city, white and colored.

Along with the happier perception of the South which Duke's first two long-delayed trips to that region left with him, there was a sad and bitter one. Finding the unsatisfactory variety of gay scenes, entertainments, of hotel workers and hotel people everywhere in the South, Duke made a conclusion. With this country, he pointed the enormous poverty he saw throughout the Southern States he visited.

"Hungry people are nice," Duke summed up his impression. "It's not pleasant to see that and know it, but it's true. Hungry people are nice. And the South is full of hungry people."

Duke did find more than the hungry people also. He has felt ever since those first trips South that the future of that region, associated with such sorrow and pain and ugliness for his people, might very well be a good future. The South, Duke felt, was a source of both misery and happiness for the Negro, and after close personal contact with it, and with its people, he felt the misery might be overcome and the happiness elevated and widely disseminated.

CHAPTER TWELVE

STEPPING INTO SWING SOCIETY

THEY weren't calling it "swing" in 1934, but the names of something new were being told. Duke was doing all right, his reputation big, his one-nighter money bringing up, and movies bookening. The Mackay-Mason bands were doing all right, too. But something else, not Mickey Mouse certainly, hady close to Duke, but closer, really, to Fletcher Henderson, was coming up. Benny Goodman made a rub at the headlining business at Billy Rose's New York cabaret, the Minsk, the Minsk Hall, and so one of the three bands on the National Review three-hour swing over NBC Sunday nights (the other two were Xavier Cugat, and a studio outfit under Kai Winding). They were only made than Benny and a few other men made in 1934. Duke wasn't bothered, and the money would take his pay much overboard.

Duke went out to Hollywood, to play Schubert's Casino Club and to make a couple of movies for Paramount. He was set first for *Music at the Prowler*, a mystery film built around Earl Carroll's Hollywood theatre-restaurant. The band came on in aghast at the mystery costume, belittled and belittled and belittled-off because some moviehouse studio designer thought the eighteenth-century costumes proper for the performance of Lear's *Second Hungarian Rhapsody*, an odd nineteenth-century work. After just enough resistance to recognize the film worthless, a quick dance brought the boys back in dinner jackets and a change of tempo. The *Hungarian* became the *Strong Rhapsody*, and was advanced to a vigorous Ellington

retrofitment. Knowing Liza wasn't Duke's idea (it was Sam Caskin's and Arthur Johnson's), they did it and Duke is proved upon their "improvement."

Caskin and Johnson were the writers that year; they wrote twenty-eight songs, almost all from Duke recorded two big hits from *Murder at the Mansion-Guests* for Fox and *Live and Love Tonight*. They were recorded in Hollywood, with Tully and Tinsl out of the house. Tully just missed the recording date. Tinsl had been out for a year, rehearsing the musicians in a duo.

Two pairing and *Sherry Rhapody* were successful records, but there was more distinction in seven earlier sides he made for Victor in Chicago, in 1933 and 1934, and more money in at least one of them. The distinction may be found in abundance in *Eighteen Express* and *Dear Old Shanghai*. The one was an imitation, cheap for cheap, not for cost and cheap for cheap, at a railroad expense, just as basic as Arthur Honegger's loved *Pavane* ago, and much less successful as a result of being confined to the length of a three-minute ten-inch record. The other was the popular race influenced from the spiritual, *Deep River*, given new color and added poignancy by Tully Sam's great vocalism. Louis Bacon, Duke's husband, was added to the trumpet section very briefly, and sang *Shanghai* and *Dear Shanghai*, which was more complete than its mate, and much more reflective than Duke's *Dear Shanghai* was in the same mood. Duke's *Deep River* and *Sherry Jones* were just notes, the last as infectious as its name. *Dear Fishing* exposed just that. There were seven distinguished sides, all as important today as when they were made, but none the masterpiece that the eighth turned out to be.

Shanghai was recorded in Chicago on January 10, 1934. A few days a year later it became an enormous hit. Duke's biggest to that date. Filled with lyrics by Eddie De Lange, it sold thousands of records and hundreds of thousands of sheetmusic copies. When Duke moved back up Broadway in 1935, he had no record it all over again. Will Shuman used the chords of an earlier Ellington tune, *Long Rhapody*, and fashioned another

tune from them, *Shanghai*, which went on to the same great success in record and measure it was much like Duke's. Duke recorded *Shanghai* and locked the second version of *Shanghai* with it.

After Murder at the Mansion, Paramount found a few spots for the band in the Max West film, *Side of the Street*, just getting under way. The band did two more Caskin and Johnson tunes, *Troubled Waters* and *My Old Flame*, and on record performances of these songs, coupled together, sold very well. Two excellent singing of imagination tunes and lyrics was probably responsible for the record's success, but, as usual, she got backing from the band consistent with the songs and her singing of them.

Two ballad-length movies completed, Paramount made use of the band for a short, *Symphony in Black*. Ten minutes long, the short employed most of the clichés usually associated with the dramatic presentation of Negroes. Right out of Oscar Hammerstein's lyrics for *Of This River*, Big Black soldiers were executed and strangled, leading heavy balls into warehouses on river wharves, they killed him himself. And then, for another audience appeal, there was a total hole story, the current example, the theme of jealousy underhand beauty and the separation then accompanied by black symphonies. But the music was good, and when the short was issued in 1935, it was some success, though no record to *Black and Tan* had. Perhaps the producers had begun to spot the disgusting overtones in the locked up black Negro characters.

The movies were good, and they paid off, but the Coast wasn't as interested in 1935 as it had been in '34. Audiences were sparse at the Casino Club; only Ellington's standards, the new lines and movements, came around to pay their respects and Mr. Shuman's wife, Wong Mamote, the composer, singer and character, who made California his headquarters, turned up this spangle, "Being" and "Being," a few years later, "being" came over the mountains yet.

The rest of the century was more interested. There were the Southern juries, filled with expressions, who from and hopes

and genuine thrills as Duke and the boys destroyed some signs of health and sobriety before the law. There were one-nighters through every state in the union, and dancers wore, with ups and downs, less just enough of the former, as the band books records, to keep salaries comfortable and squawks down to a minimum. There was talk of an engagement at the leading Chicago night club, the Club Paris, as the Chicago Inn of the Hotel Sherman, where most of the leading dance bands of that era played. But neither materialized, James Oscar Fawcett, President of Local 14, the white Chicago local of the American Federation of Musicians, was very anxious to keep all out-of-town entertainers, white or colored, from his city. He didn't side against them, he just discouraged their bookings.

The band stumbled from one one-night stand to another. There were hardships on the road, delicacies of securing living space in some of the worst, Jan Crow fell to others, and the standard good, from ballrooms to ballrooms to ballrooms with little time or space between to breathe, to sit down and rest a little and live like other people. There was a good quota of grumbling in the band, and ugly rumors began to spread in the music business. George Frazee, who ran a jam column in the *Boston Traveler* under the head of George's *Alibi*, was among hardly.

The greatest jam band of all time may look up. Word is making the rounds that some of Duke Ellington's boys are men to know him—the great big person, William French, and two others. . . . It's not the smart thing imaginable to talk of Duke's working without that big screen. . . . There are some people recognizing that he never bothered to translate to manuscript paper, a fact that makes and put a big wrench about his being one whose playing is presented with the dynamic Ellington personality. It'll be a bad blowdown if that kind of his split.

Actually, two men did leave. Behind, the least efficient rhythm man Duke ever had, left, and Duke hired two less players to take his place—not because two were needed to equal William, but simply because Duke wanted to hear lots of bass, and really

some for the bassmen) as a harmonic adjunct to the band. Billy Taylor, who had played a big sound solo and done a strong bass for McKinney's Cotton Pickers, came in first. And then Hayes Allen, who sold liquor' later in a business association with his wife, took over the other bass. Whitted left, too, but only briefly and because he was ill with the beginnings of a disease which was to wreck his body and torture his mind and finally kill him. For the few months he was gone, Charles Allen took his place and played a competent version trumpet in his place.

The grumbling was growing, there were these reasons. There were genuine hardships, and then a serious blow. Mildred had wanted to quit to Duke about his mother, but she was his aunt. Since 1922, Dr. Thomas Amos, Mildred's doctor and consequently Duke's, had been warning Mildred,

"Mrs. Ellington is a sick woman," Dr. Amos said in 1922.

"She ought to go to the Medical Center," he said in 1925.

"She must go," he lectured later that year. But Aunt May was afraid of hospitals and skeptical of hospitals. She refused to go.

By September, 1925, Duke's mother was aware of her illness. She knew she had cancer and she decided to go home to Washington. She would feel right in Washington, she would like managing investments. They would help, surely. She left New York.

Aunt May refused to worry about herself. She was much more concerned about others. When Duke asked her about herself and about the treatment she was taking, she turned him aside.

"Never mind, Edward," she said, "How are your boys in your opera program?" She asked about individual members of the band and business associates, and refused to talk about herself. But talk about herself or not, the worsening disease was slowly eroding her flesh. She allowed herself to be moved to Providence Hospital, a distinguished sanatorium and research center in Detroit. Duke arranged his bookings as he could be near her.

The move came too late. On May 27, 1926, with her children and husband beside her, Daisy Ellington died. Duke had

spent the last three days of her life with her head on his mother's pillow, the customary love of food was gone and his most of all was departed with a dash: time to his mother had left he was depressed in spirit with her. He refused first at her sleeping and some of her writing moments, on May 15 and 16 and 17.

His mother's death was a terrifying shock Duke reported to the *Wills*, always a great scholar, and to the senior confessor of his own mind. He brooded, however, at a time.

"I have no ambivalence left," he told friends. "When Mother was alive, I had something in fight for, I could say, 'I'll fight with anybody, against any kind of odds. You wanna fight? O.K., because I'm fighting for my mother and the money I get will go to her.' Now what? I can see nothing. The bottom's out of everything."

The bottom did seem to be out of everything. It was hard to understand what was happening on records: just apart with Brunswick, the first date had been a complete loss, especially. None of the four sides made was released. Duke made two of them. *see, Alabamians*, in the records, was released coupled with the new *Merry Go-Round*. Another three sides, made later, were not issued. And of the eight sides which were issued, only four were Ellington originals. And of the four Ellington originals, the two which became the biggest hit. In a double-sided sheet, with many more records for Duke Nelson and Benny Goodman than a day for Duke. This was another black mark: you can hear Duke in one of his rare later-day appearances on the record, better by far than the Goodman and Nelson performances which caused it.

Discouraged and bewildered, Duke turned to his music and turned on a masterpiece, one of his five legendary works, the first one since *Crook's Ragtime* and the first of a new series of compositions. This was *Reminiscing in Tempo*, four record sides inspired by the mood of his moment, the brooding over his mother's death. "It was written," Duke says, "in a soliloquizing mood. It begins with pleasant thoughts. Then something goes wrong. Then you snap out of it, and it ends affirmatively." The four record sides follow a pattern roughly like

Duke's soliloquies, with alternating sadness and gladness expressed by his piano, the saxophones, muted trumpet and trombone. There is particularly moving piano-tones in Duke's muted trumpet solo on the second side, the third theme introduced in the work and the most enduring. This side ends with a brilliantly checked piano solo, from which you persons have been borrowing ever since. The piano's trumpet tone comes back in moments by full orchestra and chorale, bringing the third side to an end. The last side, the most coherent, is a recapitulation of the previous three, with solo trumpet and ensemble—carrying the dramatic weight and the solemnity and the masculinity of the earlier portions of the work—giving way to something which, if not joyful, is at least not morbid. "... You snap out of it, and it ends affirmatively."

The reaction to *Reminiscing in Tempo* was equally mixed. John Hammond, by the time Duke's career crisis, gave it scathing criticism in *Down Beat*. "Very" and "profound" were his words. Others pressed to demand it, but without any attempt to analyze it, to identify the themes or call the solo or away the mood. Even in England, there was much blank criticism as Edgar Jackson in *The Gramophone*. Jackson admitted he did not understand it, though there was nothing, surely, so heavy about the music. In another English magazine, Leonard Hilsie gave *Reminiscing in Tempo* its only critical breath: he rebuked the composition to recorded music. Hilsie admitted he thought at first, "It was dull and uninspired. . . . It wasn't you and it wasn't mine. . . . At the same time, I had too high an opinion of Duke to think he would willingly perjure anything like the potboiler jobs that this appeared to be. . . ." After many hearings Hilsie saw the release of the dance a pattern of movement and movement, and some suggestion of color. The conclusion was easy. "Very briefly, I believe that Duke has allowed us to 'tune-in' on his mind at work."

The greatest controversy caused by the work was among old hip students. Caught up in the swing movement which Benny Goodman had brought to full flower, these youngsters through-

and America followed the time-honored precedent of their professors among hot jazz fans, the English Rhythm Club members and the French enthusiasts. They met over hot records, instead of hot rivers, and discussed with a fervor they did not bring to their more conventional studies the last points of Dix and Fats, and Jelly Roll and Benny. To their credit may it be said that in those first years of "swing," there was more interest in the live performer than in their dead or parodying programmes. Remembering in Tangle noticed this interest admirably. The debates recalled the country's composers. The trend was to Goodman and Ben Crosby, to loud big-brassmen "billy-dollers," with swooping trumpets and pounding rhythms and one impressed with what another. Then was swing, the bats decided. But was Armstrong in Tangle? That was the question. This work of Duke's was twelve measures long, four times as long as the other band pieces on records. It was carefully organized, not usually "more arranged" than the three-measure pieces of Goodman, but its notes were more a part of the non-system of the whole than in Benny's jump numbers, and there was less rhythmic regularity here, abrupt changes of tempo, wandering in and out of tempo. This was a work more easily comparable to a short novel poem than to a swing waltzer. And swing was the thing in 1935 and '36.

Duke had described "swing" as jazz. "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing," he had said, and defined it. Swing was and is the way a jazz musician is played, the spontaneous life a performer or ensemble gets from jazz performances. In the middle and late thirties, swing lost its standing as a verb and was relegated to the status of a noun and a category. Jazz was dead, long live swing. There was no difference between the two kinds of music: they were and are one and the same, but distinctions were being made. Out with the old jazz, in with the new swing. Swing meant arranged big-band jazz to the majority of fans and musicians, who used it to denote and compare the new music. That was the explanation of the anticipated disillusion. Now what about its musical meaning?

Benny Goodman's band had perpetrated this thing called swing; it was logical to ask Benny and his boys what "swing" meant. They had some interesting, conflicting and rather ambiguous answers.

Gene Krupa said it was "complete and inspired freedom on rhythmic interpretation." That was a drummer's answer, the drummer.

Joe Hay, Benny's pianist, said it was "spontaneous expression."

Benny himself said, "See John." John Hammond was Benny's close confidant and critical adviser. He spoke for Benny. With Marshall Stearns, president of the United Hot Clubs of America, English teacher at Yale, John produced a definition: "A band swings when its collective interpretation is rhythmically ungrounded." The best thing about this definition is that it uses the word properly: as the majority of musicians had been using it for years, as a verb.

Wings Munroe explained swing: "Feeling an increase in tempo though you're still playing at the same tempo." He and Hay were referring really to the swing of two rhythms against each other, triplets against steady quarter notes, three against two, polyrhythms, the thing Duke had been doing for years.

Glenn Miller, who in those years was identified simply as "swing troubadour," said it was "something that you have to feel, a sensation that can be conveyed to others."

Clark Wells, who didn't need to be identified, drew a picture: "It's like lower's a girl, and lower's a fight, and then enter her again."

And Louis Armstrong summed it all up: "Swing is my idea of how a jazz band'd go." Nothing very clear, and yet something all the musicians knew and felt and understood: "how a jazz band'd go." Swing was and is susceptible of definition: it is the rhythmic imagination, but not in walks or march tempo, of soloists or groups thereof or whole bands or just a corner of a band. In the thirties, the more attentive musicians could have

and anyone who was doing was. But the commercial value of the commodity was in its reputation elements and so doing was something indefinable, hazy and wonderful.

With the interest in the new jazz, swing, there was a corresponding interest in the language spoken by the swing gentlemen, not their musical language, unfortunately, but their "Swingtalk." Musicians obliged. They spoke about their "beats" (beats), "big house" (house), "dash pump" (front house). They talked the language of "jazz" seriously meaning the word itself, which meant them as new to the community, to lead them on, to joke with them. That was in a verb. As a noun, jazz was one of a hundred synonyms for musicians. The musicians themselves used some specialized words, of course — *blowouts*, from the German, denoted high notes, incandescence and never bands and liquor fiddlers. "In the groove" described music that was "in there," that swing, that hit a steady tempo and held it and moved in phrases and harmonic shifts. If you were "sweat," your sweat was caught by the music, you were entranced by music in the groove. The genuine words mixed colloquially with the lingo. Musicians rarely if ever called their instruments by the revealing terms thought up by the writers of magazine articles about jazzmen. They weren't intimidated jazz reduced to a vocabulary of trade metaphors and questionable music. They were professionals with a specialized professional vocabulary, the term of a craftsman and positively descriptive, the want of a clearly identifiable as such and quickly relegated to the limbo of jargonist phrases, to be forgotten afterward dubbed as "jazz" from "coated," meaning from the notes, the meaning. If you used those pointed about words, you were crazy, and no musician or fan wanted to be called that most horrible of names.

At last, Duke was left out of the growing swing ranks. Benny Goodman, Bob Crosby, Tommy Dorsey, Jimmy Dorsey, Ben Waller, Red Norvo, Jimmy Lunford, Chick Webb, and Grady. Walter Brown and Teddy Bell, were the big swing names. That didn't mean that Duke was a low-class failure, that his music was to be shunned, it was the great music, the

music in the background, the music that inspired all the other music, but it wasn't exactly swing, according to the swing lights. Actually, the bands which qualified as swing bands were simply those which were formed or came up during the so-called swing years, after 1935. The Dorsey brothers didn't qualify with their polished band. It was before '35. But their separate bands, formed in '35, did. Duke was no accident. In 1935, a twelve-year-old jazz neophyte, his music was revered but simply not regarded as swing. And though the money was still good, and the records selling fairly well, the first years of swing were not encouraging for Edward Ellington. He was laid aside for about a year and a half.

Then Ned Williams really went to work. He laid down a language of publicity for Duke and it helped. Ned was an interesting figure in Duke's life in the thirties. He was living Duke's publicity dream, a sham, holding man who looked as if he sold something, something quite good, maybe. He always wore a flower in his lapel and wound the ends of his mustache all they would. He wore open and, as short, dressed in the manner of poets, flowers, sage and varied mustache, double-breasted waistcoat, dark worn, grey tie. He talked easily, if a little nervously, and really loved Duke and his music and swing both.

"It took me three years, maybe," he said, "to get close to Duke, but, brother, it was worth the struggle. You see," he explained, "Duke looks you over, takes a time to make up his mind; but once he's made up, he's all out for you." He told Duke to magazine and newspaper editors by telling them about his remarkable personality, the scope of his interests, the vast extent of his personality, things as if he were telling them as on a secret. There was something about his own personality that generally got across, and then got Mr. Ellington across.

"How about that acting in front of his band, the stuff with which he opens all his stage shows? That ain't jazz," Ned said, "but, brother, it sure is good."

When Duke opened at the Urban Room at the Chicago Congress Hotel on the eighth of May, 1938, things were better and were getting better all the time. He was following Benny

Goodman and Ben Pollack in a room that was apparently going to be dedicated to the bands that played jazz, then swing. Chicago was pretty enthusiastic about Duke. The antithesis grew in the Chicago Rhythm Club took over E. M. Ashcraft, known as "Squirrel" to his fans here, was one of the moving spirits of the club. An amateur musician himself, "Squirrel" was the niece of a weekly suburban Chicago family, he could not dodge his jazz fingers. Helen Oakley was the other Rhythm Club force. Helen was the daughter of a Canadian wool manufacturer. But Helen was more intensely attached to jazz than to Toronto society, and she left Canada practically early in the twenties to work in the music business she adored, for living skills, Chick Webb and Duke at various times in the following years. In 1938, it was the Rhythm Club, with Squirrel Ashcraft.

The Rhythm Club was holding Sunday concerts at the Congress. The scheduled afternoon marker that year, when Teddy Wilson had flown out to Chicago from New York to play one with Benny Goodman, and remained to form the nucleus of the small Goodman unit with Benny and Gene Krupa, was already past history. Those concerts with Duke were memorable affairs, too.

There were also Concert Nights at the Urban Room. Full advantage was taken of Duke's eminence in the field. The Rhythm Club obtained the afternoon and evening concerts with the presentation of a gold banner to Duke. Because Chicago musicians of white skin were not reflexively free of prejudice, the presentation was not altogether as it should have been. But the desired effect was fully produced.

The Rhythm Club at first approached these well-known Chicago white jassmen to make the presentation. They all refused, singly and collectively. The Club asked Raynor Schemm, who reviewed musical events for the Chicago Daily News, to present Duke with his glittering stick. Schemm was delighted. He did it, at the first Concert Night. "I am aware of no race here where goodness is concerned," Schemm said, and with honor as presence in Duke's, he handed Ellington his banner.

The Urban Room was the scene of a curious encounter between Duke and one of his greatest critics. Said enemy critic was sitting with Helen Oakley one night in May, at a regular table, listening intently to the band he had once loved, but which no longer suited his passions. The band played *Chorus Line*, featuring Benny Bepko, a mostly weak character, by accepting glissandos as the only instrument, by a feeling of missing membership checked from an instant standing.

"Self-conscious," the critic said, "self-conscious and possessive, like so much of Duke's newer work. There is an element which prevents all of his writing today . . ."

"Oh, be quiet," Helen said, and laughed to cover the strength of her feelings.

The band stopped playing. Duke sat down at the piano with the look of brief, long-suffering pain with which he approaches a long piano solo. His eyes wandered at the edge, his hands suspended briefly above the keyboard, he approached a large work. He played. The band played. He played some more. It was something the critic didn't know.

"That's it!" the critic cried, "That's it!" He popped up from his chair in his confusion. He sat down again, but there in the continuation of suspense was indicated for him great emotional stirring within. He lowered his head in reverent appreciation of the music. Helen smiled. When it was over, he spoke again.

"How wonderful, how perfectly wonderful," he said, "And better!"—he added the *Cento de Gershwin*—"the band moved on it. How wonderful!"

Duke came up to the table. The set was over. He bowed to the critic and smiled broadly. "How are you?" he asked.

"Very well, very well," the critic replied. "Duke," he said, springing up to take Duke by the hand, "that was it!"

"It?" Duke asked, looking around to see what he was talking about. The decoration, smiled his manner assumed. Or that lovely girl in the corner? You couldn't be talking about me or my music, Duke's manner suggested. No, no, not that.

But he was, he was. "That last thing you played, *Explosion*. The real Duke," he told Duke, as if the man standing before

him with that name were a precursor to the storm. He was hot and bothered. "What was it, Duke, what was it?"

"Something new," Duke said.

"What do you call it?"

"No special name for it. It's just one of my new works."

"Well, that's it," she cried, concluded, "that's it."

The music had been *Romancing in Tempo*, which the last of his new music had pulverized in his opinion as one of the best of his past repertoire. Duke never told him when it was, neither did Helen. It remained a private joke between the two of them.

The Congress engagement was a happy one in many ways. Duke and Helen again in Jack Hyman, who was in Chicago with his band, American musicians under an English leader. Hyman finished up at the Duke Hotel the night after Duke opened at the Congress. Jack had come to this country on the understanding that he would find a band, but that the personnel would have to be American. He got some lucrative bookings and a radio contract, and introduced some British variety acts to America on that half-hour weekly airing, such as the Shaligrams, Pat O'Malley. In Chicago, he and Duke talked over the facts and trends, the extraordinary success of the Ellington team of England and France, and Duke once more renewed his promise to meet over noon and repeat.

"There's a book, now, Duke," Jack said.

"I know the man," Duke acknowledged.

"Money at Lakes," Hyman alerted.

"So it goes. I may never go around the world, though," Duke said. "I'd love to."

In spite of many new movies, columns and trade paper reports that Duke would repeat his European tour, it didn't materialize in 1938 as it had in the year before, and wouldn't for a few more years. 1939 was destined to be another year of near-nothing, with occasional weeks at theaters. But at least the Congress engagement proved that Duke was still inspiring, his name important in a hotel and in the newspapers, and the sense of achievement was huge when engagements like the Elphinstone

Club made such presentations and college kids began to worry about whether or not *Romancing in Tempo* was "swing."

Romancing was the last revival of Duke's to be made in 1939. He made a half-dozen more acts for Broadway, but they languished in the music seats of the company, unproduced, as they still do in Columbia's shelves, the change in ownership and label having apparently made no difference. And so we shall never have the early versions of *Clifford Lewis and Duke of Melrose*, but still Duke's *Demerol* and *Conno's Concerto*, or *Jumpy*, *Swing Low, I Don't Know Why I Love You*, or Duke's version of the traditional *Forward March*, one of the classics of jazz.

The new year was not a big record one for Duke. No great song hits, no remarkable instrumentalists, no such arrangements for other bands to pick up. But 1939 was the development of a new idea. Duke began to feature some of his star soloists as soloed ensembles. They weren't bona fide ensembles, in the sense that the Redd Foxxes or Muggsy Bogartes or Teddi Hearnes ensembles are, they weren't cast in the classical ensemble sense because Duke's music never followed the sporadic development of the means. But they were ensembles in the sense that they presented soloists before the band, in the sense that the back-ground Duke scored for the soloists were designed to show off the ideas and tone and color of these soloists.

The first two Ellington ensembles were the most successful, the aforementioned Clifford Lewis, which was an early triumph for Lerney, and Claude Williams' first soloists (there was another in 1940), *School of Melrose*. The *School* was made by Duke's two lone players, Duke's left hand, emphasizing the alternation of weak and strong bass, taking the place of hand clapping in underlining the rhythms. Carter's best banding grouping was set against the bass line and low sound, building into full band entrance, with the bass increasing between solos and ensembles. The coupling of the Lewis and the *School* was a brilliant one.

Then came Lawrence Brown's pretty exposition of an Ellington theme, *Yearning for Love*. But this wasn't the perfect

whale for Lawrence's beautiful moonbeams rose and remarkable facility on his horn. For one thing, the full place didn't do as a stretch record. It wasn't conceived in such kind disc conditions. For another, its lush propensities weren't as suitable a display for Lawrence as the earlier *Strut of Jive* or the later *Rise of the New Groove* or his numerous duet sets, such as the wonderful moments he plays on *All Ten Sides*.

Trumpet in Space was an allusion to Duke's formidable technique and it was a discomfiture of it. Rex, too, had to wait for a truly satisfactory show piece. He had played the horn in 1934, Christmas week, in the hangings of money, not his or Duke's or any of the guys in the band, but those of riches and some fun. Rex was a hard blower, a wit on his horn and a jazz veteran who had been playing since his fifteenth year as a professional of distinction. He had been playing with a whole lot of bands, most notably with McKinney's Cotton Pickers and Fletcher Henderson. When he brought his ballroom dark figure onto the Ellington capstanstage there were crossed fingers and shaking heads. The fingers shortly were uncrossed and the heads squared. Rex proved himself on one record and in one performance after another that the full force of his bright funk personality was not felt until 1939, while the biggest commercial hit he ever had opened had blown from record grooves in '38 when *Key Stone Horn* was made. *Trumpet in Space* was pleasant and impressive but not the impression contained in attention that any side pursuing Rex should have been.

There were some pop tunes, here in a new, *Let's Love the Straight Thing*, *Mo' Gooder Love*, *Love Is Like a Cigarette* and *Know My Baby Goodnight*. There were heavily offbeat, outstaring Duke had become a fervent under part in the trade by then. "Not the real thing, dull arrangements of dull tunes!" But they have wandered the years remarkably well. The arrangements are anything but dull and concert ordinary tunes into extraordinary music by a band of skill, feeling that didn't become really popular until three years later, when Glenn Miller made his reputation. Then there was Louis Armstrong's bag hit from the *Downswamp* *Contra's* horn show, *Shoe Shine Boy*,

which Eric sang with phallical overtones. It Was a *Sed Night* in Harlem, Duke's number to the same end key, and Oh, *Duke's Maybe Someday*, a beautiful primer of love to come, which Duke sang with the same understanding and Duke she brought to the end songs. Duke was really singing in those days, five years with Ellington had brought her voice and personality to maturity. On these sides and the four live record, she showed that equally for a *Sprigwren's* time and that looking for a vocalized phrase which made all her appearances, in the book or the radio side or photograph side, such a delight.

Duke's *Optimum* *Discovers* and *Pe a few* brought the past to a conclusion. They were precisely what their titles indicated records that got a Harlem beat, that presented Ellington's music in a just reason. They swung as no other swing bands swing with greater knowledge and more direct than their companions. They presented greater solemn than other bands could, Johnny Hodges and Tiny Tim, Quaker and Lawrence.

For a little while, the swing came and left Duke behind, not actually, simply in the attention and general head publicity. But it wasn't long before he caught up. At the end of 1939, though Benny Goodman and Tommy Dorsey were the biggest names in the business, and Duke wasn't winning any head polls, his musicianship and boss-office appeal had both proved themselves again. When he could get good bookings, he was doing fine business, and his records, when they were issued, sold well and, more important, were on a high critical level. It didn't mean a thing if it isn't got that swing—Duke said it first, and he proved it first and he maintained or proved it while some other days were being discovered for doing less effectively what he had done years earlier.

The Columbia Broadcasting System made a connection to the swing movement in the *Saturday Night Swing Session*, which made its first appearance early in 1939. Before that series of *Saturday* evening half-hours left the network, air, Duke made three appearances. It was the obvious appropriation of his nature to a swing or jazz musician or any other name that might be given to his function by the press agents and first of popular

While he was at the Cotton Club, while he was involved in these endless discussions of the meaning and significance of swing, Duke took part in swing demonstrations, demonstrations which were far more inclusive than that designation would suggest. But that was the issue, and Duke's fight to change it was useless. The United Hot Clubs of America held a meeting at the Miami studios and leading musicians played to exemplify "hot" in its best. "Hot" or "hot jazz" was the term these musicians used. Duke played as part of a trio with Clark Mills on drums and Arno Shaw on clarinet. In spite of the sector organization, the manner by its governors upon the use of their term, the meanings of hot and moderate and learned aficionados, *gas swing*, was defined a "swing session" by trade papers.

When Duke played at Randall's Island, with twenty four other bands, in a five hour and forty-five minute "Swing Festival" on May 29, 1938, his music was called swing and there was nothing he could do about it. The affair was organized by WGNW "blue poetry" Martin Block of New York's East River Island Stadium, for the benefit of the Hospital Fund of London of the American Federation of Musicians. It was characterized in the mid New York Times put it, by "swing." The Times writer, like almost all others at the time, caught up by the swing fever, named off the current phrases with dispirited aplomb. He talked of "glissandos" and "displacement-over-constructively known as swing music techniques." A kind of sister with Vincent Lopez, he said, saw "Berry Maegon, queen of her music but in demand. Who stole the jazz and the crowd went wild.

Then Duke Ellington began sending his *Blonde Moments and Creations in Blue*,⁶ the Times man continued, demonstrating his intimate knowledge of the terms of the profession, "and a pair of little Brooklyn girls, wearing berry patches with swing paper written all over them, ran screaming over the center track to Lady Hop. . . . By Anderson came off the St. Louis Blues, leaping high into the air and smacking Duke on the back. The ball-batter smacked his doghouse' till it pained,

the bats were all flying and the crowd was like jelly." If swing was here to stay, then the New York Times thought that it was news fit to print and that it was proper to use its language.

Swing or something very much like it certainly was here to stay. Made with a pronounced beat, played by big bands, was to become more and not less popular, its first introduction of the performers of dozens which its all western made every week with boring regularity, its magazine articles, Sunday supplement pieces, in the pulp and upstate columns and editorial pages of the nation's newspapers. Swing was so grown and its audience so massive at least to the point where it didn't matter whether or not it was called "swing" or "jazz" as long as it did have "that swing" and the solo were good and the arrangements were satisfactory. With that growth, Duke grew in public stature, the bookings got better and he could find some solace in the present and hope in the future. He had proved himself once more, as he apparently was required to do periodically. He had found his place as swing escape.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

MAIN STEM

ONCE WHEN THE COTTON CLUB WAS ASSOCIATED WITH DUKES in 1927 and 1928 The Palace Royal, famous as the New York home of the Paul Whiteman band in earlier years, was converted into an all-Negro club in '34, where Count Basie once moved his up-town house. Count's son, in that era. Next year the Cotton Club, formerly Harman Stark presiding, took over, and the big room on the top floor of one of Broadway's most successful "razz joints" achieved great musical distinction again. For two years Duke headed the top show, opening in the late winter and staying through early spring.

Before moving into the Cotton Club, in 1933, the Ellington organization camped around the midway, playing one-nighters upon and between and between. In November of '34, after a successful three-day stint at the Texas Centennial Exposition in Dallas, the band played a week at the Club Mañana in the same city. Duke's papers made much of the fact that this was "the first extended appearance of a Negro band at a downtown spot" in that city.

The band moved next way to the Coast, for another stay at Sebastian's Cotton Club out there, moving upon with the roadies and Indiana who people Calver City just below the Cotton Club store, the band played the Los Angeles Palladium Theatre, and with "swing" and making newspaper headlines, gained a good share of good work and appearance. At Sebastian's Duke arrived notice of his new conception of the band. He played a swing concert. But, as one of the reviews of the evening by a disconcerting critic in the Beverly Hills *Reflex* put it, it wasn't "a swing concert. It was, rather, a ritual—a ritual

of the Ellington compositions and technique and values, associated with a maximum of sincere feeling and a maximum of politeness . . . for in the absence of business and musical genius and show, the Duke's music becomes not the product of 'the wood' or jazz or hysterical dancing, but a sincere product of the Negro, made basically an even abstract rhythm of Africa and the Deep South, decorated by the instrumentation that civilization has loan to the Duke himself. As such it is individual and distinctive . . ."

The amount of sincerity or sincerity poems in color just mentioned "artificial genius and show" is certainly not susceptible of mass appeal, and Duke's rhythms were not then nor are they now "obscene." But this critic's appreciation of the musical dignity of his presentation, and the high degree of craftsmanship incredible in a record of Ellington compositions, was a kind of unobtrusive chord to a new movement of Duke. Wherever he went now, there was a respect accorded his work, which other clever band leaders and composers didn't get. Duke was a woman, not an old man in the business, but an original with unusually precocious awareness of his obligations.

The band played a gig once at the University of California in Los Angeles, first of several on college campuses. This was an extension of the concert or critical side. There had been the Ellington Club concerts and the Concert Wagon at the Congress in Chicago, the Sebastian's Concert and now this. Duke was moving along.

On the Coast, too, Duke made a mark, nothing terribly important, but one which added money and perhaps a touch of prestige to his name. For Republic, one of the smaller companies which specialized in class B movies and spreading outside, Duke used the trend in some bands in motion pictures. He did *The Hot Petals*, in which the costumes of Eddie Duchan and Carl Hoff were also featured. Duke played *For God Is He a Rag Queen*, a song in tune with the times, in title revising one of the traditional words of jazz. "Rag Queen" was one of Halcyon's terms for a pretentious, a technically skilled dancer, for on his feet and "rag" (in the jazz or swing know)

Fletcher Henderson had used the same many years earlier in his *King Cotton* song. The movie set the band in a background of palm trees and low lighting, with the moving bodies of the musicians reflected in glowing shadow on the backdrop of dense bandstand. Harry Carey, Rex Brown and Hays Africa, a handsily improvised word team, sang Duke's amusing words.

Two rock stars—all on the Coast to make a movie at M-G-M. She appeared in the much talked-of colored sequence of the Marx Brothers' *A Day at the Beach*, in which Harpo led a group of Negro children and adults in a modern version of the Fred Flyer of Harlem song through the pleasant places of *All God's Children Got Rhythm*. The song was a parody-satire, but Harpo's infectious personality and the warmth and grace of the colored dancers and Fred's superb singing gave it credence. The presence of Ellington musicians in the recording orchestra which played the scored track background for the dancing and singing helped, too.

Before leaving the West Coast, she band had come down to play in the Pacific Northwest. One was memorable. It played Duke in a theater with Katherine Cornell. The Seattle papers made much of that.

The band was due at the Palace Theatre in Seattle on a Tuesday afternoon. The previous Friday, it had left San Jose, just before San Francisco. Rain and snow impeded the progress of the train through the Coast's traditional by way February rain-belt, but everybody believed they would make the Seattle engagement on time. At Vancouver, the train was halted, but not so long that it couldn't make Tacoma on time for a Sunday night stand. Then Ellington on Monday is backed off right, first as Ellington the weather grew more awfully snowy. The snow ceases from, the wind can become awfully cold. The band was moved, with some of its baggage, into a hotel, the musicians wrapping their feet and slipping their hands and tucking their heads into their coat collars as best they were.

"Oh, my hands," the music assistant, "Oh, my hands!"

"I am so cold," Duke complained softly, "so damn cold."

The quick transition from Southern California sun to Wash-

ington air and snow was expected of these hard musicians, particularly of Negro players, who always played one-nighters, whose schedules never permitted them to sit down for very long in any one spot. But that was tougher than usual. It was so cold.

Next day, the train pulled laboriously toward Seattle and managed to arrive there at 11 a.m. in the afternoon, just about as time to make an appearance at the Palace. But another crisis manifested. The baggage car locks were jammed, the cold had left its mark on the instruments that is, too, was frozen stiff, and the musicians couldn't get clothes or instruments. Fortunately, there were enough instruments in the sleeping car to play a show, and so, after several vain attempts to break into the baggage car, the musicians piled into cabs and were rushed to the theater, but it was very late.

At the Palace the manager was worried. He remembered the Katherine Cornell incident of a few months earlier, when the actress and her company had been called on three very late nights by driving rains and icy blasts of wind. They had arrived hours late, with little hope of performing that night. But in the early hours of the morning, with Seattle citizens still waking patiently to see and hear the Cornell company, they had arrived, not, after the proper speeches, put on *The Success of Wanda* at the driver in modern street dress. There was hope, then, for Ellington. The manager screened a Lowell Thomas short subject for the second time. He was greeted by whistles and cheers and derisive applause from the impatient audience.

"Wait," the manager said, as he mounted the Palace stage. "The Duke never disappoints." As he spoke, somebody connected with the theater mounted the stage and whistled at his car. The manager turned to the audience and smiled. "They're waiting," he said. "I've just got word that Duke has just left the station."

The Lowell Thomas short was run through again, and then, after a short stage wait, the curtains parted and revealed the Ellington group clad in a motley assortment of street clothes, sport shirts, business shirts, some with, some without ties. Duke

himself was in smart clothes. The audience poured away in gratitude for the quick transformation from cold muscadin to hot, for the abandonment of hair, dress, and body, now. The newspapers picked up the story and made business headlines feature material of it.

DORIS BARD CONQUERS TROUBLE,
PARKS PALOMAR

Princess
Film Arts
Reviewed

One writer summed up the effect of the hand upon dancing beauty: "Fifteen handlines, including the Duke, ran wild in a long blast of red hot rhythm, then cool off to deep, rich tones of velvety smoothness. A treat to the eye as well as to the ear. . . ."

Duke continued to make newspaper headlines in 1937. Doris Taylor worked him and Guy Lombardo with long thin archaic hands to determine the scientific possibilities and limitations of the microphone in radio broadcasting, in an article in the magazine, *The New York Mirror*. Taylor pointed out the unusual sensitivity of the microphone and the delivery required to handle it properly. Ellington and Lombardo, he opined, were most successful in their use of radio as a musical medium. Hundreds of newspapers from coast to coast used the story, some merely as filler material, some as a full length feature, with Duke's name prominent in the headline.

Fred Waring, at San Francisco with his Paramounts playing a theatre engagement, was interviewed in the *Chewchuck*. Queried about his musical taste he cited several handlines he admired, Henry Goodman, Cab Calloway and Duke, whom he mentioned first, and with the greatest enthusiasm. "I think that Duke Ellington is the genius of the commercial musical world," he said. "He has paved the way for modern music as we know it today and is a really great creator." It is never when one leader in a profession gets out of his way to praise another

and not merely as a capable colleague, but as "the genius" of his world. Newspapers again picked up a story on Ellington.

Only the talented press drew attention to a typical house-paid Duke. A firm of British contractors, Alexander Wells, Ltd., having completed a group of apartments in one of London's better districts, at 29, Mount Square, S.W. 1, Scotland, decided to name them Ellington Court after Duke. The apartments, of the international style, were in the tradition of Le Corbusier and Erich Mendelsohn, great architectural exponents of our time. It seemed logical to name them after an innovator in another field, an art in which architecture has long been compared ("Architecture is known music," said the nineteenth-century German philosopher, Friedrich von Schelling; so too *Philosophy of Art*, and *Musical in Art* about the instrument and music is long felt). The Wells firm explained its decision in a letter to Duke:

It is the pleasure in this country to give names to blocks of apartment houses and, like the buildings to which they are applied, these often appear somewhat dull or dead. Granted that our improvement was another dull one, that we took the liberty of naming it after your good self. The considerable interest aroused is a valuable indication of the popularity you enjoy in this country.

There was some interested comment in the relation, a flurry of excitement, as Duke joined with eight other handliners in the Mills studio in the creation of a popular song, each to write two measures. They also was Milton Meib's, and like some idea of any comedian, big or little, to tell the

The biggest talk around New York was continued by the opening of the second show at the downtown Cotton Club. Cab had opened the transformed Cotton's Inn. Duke followed with a brilliantly long series, with ten featured solos, from his band and Ethel Waters, down to the Three Girls of Rhythm. In between, there were the symphonies, the Mahalia Robinsons, singer George Dewey Washington, Ramo and Rauls, track Cuban thrills, some, Duke-duchy Kolich, Anne and Nene,

Bennie Dudley and Bill Bailey, old dancers, Edna's wiggled her belly to Duke's *Black and Tan Fantasy*; Bennie Dudley shook her hips to Duke's *in Rhythm*, as she led on the band's European tour. There was very little else representative of Ellington in the show, except a medley of his ten tunes, an inevitable part of any Ellington show from then on. The show danced to Duke's, credited, at first, to Harry James and the Three Chorus leaders who made the same mistake. But Duke's came straight out of Duke's into *Stuck in a Rhythm*, and Duke's name was eventually added to the long list of composer credits. With Duke's, then, Duke was indelibly represented in the Cotton Club show, and directly with the melody and some background music, his dancers, but that's all. You sang a chorus, Duke For Ellington then, the bands came during the dance act, of which there were previous ones. But there and the pleasant air that and the generous space in the city's night-club columns reminded readers and listeners that Duke was a polished night-club musician, one of the first band leaders to show in the field, and that his band was well-nigh unsurpassable.

Irving Mills took advantage of Duke's position in New York for an extended period to make a book of Ellington recordings for his own new firm, Master Records. The company was short-lived, but during its existence it issued a large number of first-rate performances by most of the ranking colored names of the late thirties, all that Mills himself managed, and some that he didn't. Duke and Cab and Don Redman, Lucky Miller's Mills New Rhythm Band and a large number of small bands specially assembled for the purpose made records for Master. Mills' 778 label, in Yonkers, has got due its addition to these records, Mills brought out a series introducing for the first time small Ellington units, seven or eight men recruited from the Ellington band, under the leadership of Barney Bigard, Johnny Hodges, Conde Williams or Rex Stewart.

Barney and Johnny had discarded their names. Barney Bigard and His Jazzmasters, Johnny Hodges and His Orchestra. Conde and Rex, as trumpeters, were traditionally credited to some jive name: Conde Williams and His Rag Chorus, Rex

Stewart and His grand Sweet Shopettes. Explanation of the grand Sweet Shopettes in Rex's case is his use of a few musicians outside the Ellington band, sometimes Conde Burke and Rex Flegle and drummer Jack Milled. Conde played a Hawaiian guitar, Rex acted dumb, as he does now, for Rex's small band dates. Jack Milled dreamed about for Duke in studio rehearsals of the big band.

The few records made by these small Ellington units were memorable. Barney made the first date later on 778, an Ellington standard, *Stomp* James, two in which he had a company band, *Clouds in My Mind* and *Profile* Rex, and the first recording of Juan Tami's classic contribution to the Ellington library, *Cannon*. Johnny made a lot of pops which sold very well in the growing softness that hovered around the country's juke joints and even the record store counters. The classical idea and extreme style of the Rabbis was a commercial success. It carried a musical homestead that never missed him, as show or studio or up jumps, in an ordinary popular tune or one of his own imaginative creations.

Conde produced records which reflected his own personality and that of his horns. The grand old pool show, the great of music jazz, the musical sweet and hot and successful music always mixed through Downtown Symphonies, *Blue Rondo*, *Dips Dips Dips* and *I Can't Believe That You're in Love with Me*, four tunes recorded by the Williams group. Rex gave Conde Burke wide berth through *Long Man's Shingle*, he carried the whole race made at his first date himself, named after himself, *Longman*.

When Mills' firm was transferred, back like due to the Broadway building, each passed into Duke and Cab and Hudson-Fr Langford and found a number of fine records well introduced, to the American Record Company, these small Ellington units continued to make dates. They appeared on the A&R's 778 label, Warden. And one impressive coupling after another was issued during '33, '34, and '35. When the band moved to Yonkers in 1935, the small units transferred to the 840 label, to make more but not less effective records.

Overriding in these records is the balance of scored backgrounds and improvised solos. The personnels were interchangeable, with Claude playing for Barney and Johnny as well as for himself. Carry on all four units, and the rhythm section usually the big band's regulars, down to Duke himself. Seven or eight men with the same horns and personalities played at one time or another for each of the five leaders, yet the records managed to preserve the character and musical temperament of the four different men. Naturally, they themselves took great chunks of solo work, and they gave individual stamp to their records. In addition, however, they coordinated tunes and times and helped to put the backgrounded strings together. The result was a most distinguished series of small band recordings—with those made by Benny Goodman's Trio, Quartet, Quintet and Sextet, perhaps the finest music ever committed to disc grooves by small jazz groups.

For Mister Duke departed from disreputable Ellington procedure here. He made piano medleys, he has begged bits on the two sides of one record, *Mood Indigo*, *Solitude*, *Sophisticated Lady* and *In a Sentimental Mood*. The band made four negligible pops, the movie tunes, Duke's *Key Change*, and the much-spoken *Two Bad Guys* for the blues. But what it did *The New East Is, Some Trouble Do* and *The New Arrangement* *Providence*, recording these last pieces back of ten years earlier, when the band had made its first important records. *Caravan*, building into a big hot *Arise*, in the *Indigo* mood, *Section' at the 5th Ave*, a brass riff tune, and the program *Midway House* completed the *Mister Ell*.

At the Cotton Club, it was slow going at first, playing more background music than anything else. But there were compensations. Leopold Stokowski came in one night. He sat alone in a box under the rapid-stories screens of the Cotton Club calling Duke noticed him and joined the white-haired conductor. Stokowski rose to meet him.

"I have always wanted to meet you and hear you conduct your compositions," Stokowski said.

"This is one of the proudest moments of my life. I've always had the greatest admiration for you," Ellington said.

"Tell me," Stokowski continued, after a further exchange of pleasantries, "what are you striving for in your music?"

"I am endeavoring to establish unbalanced Negro melody portraying the American Negro," Duke explained.

"I would like to see how and listen to your interpretations. It would be enlightening," Stokowski decided.

Duke played his *concerto*, *Caravan*, *Arise*, *Section of Harlem*, *Trumpet in Spades*, *Yearning for Love*. Stokowski was so impressed by the revolutionary virtuosity of the soloists, Barney, Cotton, Rex, Lawrence Brown, walking, perhaps, that his brain seizes on the Philadelphia yielded such color and vigor. Duke played in a sentimental mood and *Rockin' in Rhythm*, a good sampling of the music and their manners of expression by his orchestra. Stokowski applauded loudly.

When Duke returned to his box, the classical conductor expressed his thanks and his reasons.

"Mr. Ellington," he said, "now I truly understand the Negro soul. Perhaps you would know me by attending my concert at Carnegie tomorrow evening."

Next night, Duke sat alone in a box at Carnegie and listened, as one of the New York citizens, Louis Bell, put it, "while the Caucasian conductor led his vast orchestra [the Philadelphia pit] in an interpretation of the negro white-folk soul."

Stokowski presented a *symphony of Ellington and of jazz*. He usually supported the music of American great dance bands as the country's most original and most vigorous expression in the art and measured Stokowski finally and magnificently when the New York Philharmonic-Symphony conductor attacked "banger-music" (meaning all of popular music) as an instrument to juvenile delinquency.

Duke continued to speak for "Negro music." Fed up with the loose use of the term "swing," he insisted that his music be called what his people, "Negro music." At one point, he made a strange distinction between his work and that of the so-called swing bands.

"Being a statement and without a format," Duke said, explaining that he meant music which emphasized "the type of mental rhythm that carries a bounding, buoyant, independence urge" to an exaggerated degree, forgetting all other phases of popular musical expression. Most among his work, is "like the monotonous rhythmic bounding of a ball. After you hear just so much, you get sick of it because it hasn't enough buoyancy and there isn't enough to it."

"There is something lacking, however, to be obtained from the Negro rhythm," he said. "I predict that Negro music will be alive years after eating is dead. Negro music has color, harmony, melody and rhythm. It's what I am interested in, and I am going to stick to it. Let the others whirl and jerk, like snakes and porcupines, no more, and let me sit back and drink in the music."

Writing a guest column for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the country's top-ranking Negro newspaper, he expressed the conviction that "a new cycle of freedom in colored entertainment is just starting." He implemented his proclamation: "More and more colored bands are taking their place on the scene, and this has meant one the first successful all-Negro radio program, headed by the remarkable Louis Armstrong [for *Pittsburgh's* Year], whose work in *Pittsburgh's* *Pittsburgh* is also something to talk about."

"All of these things are good for the race," he continued. "The most of color has a worthy heritage. Not only the music and entertainment is an artistic one."

He concluded with a hopeful *Amen*. "We long have passed the era when swinging a lamp, singing a spiritual and doing a dancing these were popularly supposed to be the extent of a Negro's talent. We don't have to let all of the outstanding musicians, performers and artists of the race to convince you of this point."

"We must be proud of our race and of our heritage, we must develop the special talent which have been handed down to us through generations, we must try to make our work express the

rich background of the Negro, something that our audience always has tried to do and constantly will strive to acquire."

Agreement that Duke had succeeded in doing just that came from an unexpected source. The *Greenboro* (S. C.) *New* *Advertiser*:

"If we were asked to name the ten best American composers, living or dead, we would put Duke Ellington on the list, not because of the intricacies of his compositions, but because he has expressed the soul of his people better than any other man."

The white South answered:

With editorial recognition came many lucrative commissions of his music in the South. He had already broken down numerous and bars in Texas and Louisiana and a few other Southern states. In December, 1933, Duke broke another. He played in a concert on the Main Street of Memphis, Tennessee. The newspapers rolled up their wooden black boards again.

DUKE'S BAND REHEARS PRESENT AT ORPHEUM.

The present band, was an important one in Memphis. The big papers were impressed. "The Duke and his aggregation did something that has not been duplicated in the South City since the days of Bert Williams and the Minn. King, 'Maude,' the *Commercial Appeal* explained under the banner band has quoted short, "He played an engagement at the Orpheum—a colored attraction was billed in a Main Street theater." Its downtown group were engaged.

The *downtown* nature of this booking can be further explained. The Orpheum was the name theater which had paid the salaries of a group of colored actors who were booked to play there but didn't perform, despite the fact that they were contracted for a weeks work. They didn't perform because there were loud complaints from whites at the appearance of colored actors on the stage of a playhouse in downtown Memphis.

With Duke's booking, the second balcony was opened to colored patrons for the first time in many years. And with a also

much of history, this first colored looking for downtown Manhattan in many years took the Orpheum out of the red. The ad waiting for the event was not free of patronizing lines. Irie Anderson was billed as "The Black Bellini-Strauss Singer"; the whole program was dubbed "A Negro Revue" but the names even of Duke which accompanied three times were not laboriously cleared with halfhearted dots or marks for pronunciation clear, and the band was given top billing over the Mercury Krazy picture which accompanied it. In show world parlance, Duke got 100 per cent billing to Mercury's 25 per cent.

One of the local colored papers commented humorously on the billing, parodying the Uncle Tom decision in which most wrong about and for the Negro by whites as shown:

"Well Sir, for the first time since Great Camped on Battle St. a colored sensation will play the Orpheum . . . Colored folk, I understand, will be given not only the gallery but the balcony in which to sit. In short the Orpheum management apparently takes the position that now is a good time to see whether or not Minnie called folk will show any real appreciation for high class entertainment and better accommodations . . . Here's hoping that Ellington will crack the ice so wide that even the white folk of these parts will stand in line for more called attractions. It'll go for toward making Manhattan the financial capital of the black world, as it should be, for God's chaffin with their world of color."

"The head on this piece was a reliable show of irony." Black and Tan Fantasy, "was the show stop."

There was further recognition for Ellington's "Negro music" in broadcasts to England, carried by the British Broadcasting Company in that country, and by the Columbia Broadcasting System here. Duke was heavily quoted. Some of the programs in which the British held his music was reflected on two half-hour programs, the last on the thirty-first birthday in 1935. It was pleasant that the British business should hear the superlatives, it helped for Americans the best ever to be surrounded with the music and a generous approval of it.

Duke opening at the Casino Club in 1935, Duke and some

of his musicians played in a "High Low" concert held in late February at the Madison Road at the Hotel St. Regis, one of New York's darkest mans. The concert was held for the benefit of the League of Composers. Anderson's leading organization for the propagation of the faith in modern classical music, and the event attracted was usual. The main class which supports the League turned out in dancing numbers to patronize "high" and "low" music. As it happened, the "low" was the "high" of the concert. So distinguished an authority as Cholly Knickerbocker, famed society columnist of the New York Journal American, and so " . . . And Duke Ellington." Cholly choraled, "was the undoubted hit of the evening." Cholly stopped to see the collection. "Yes," he carried away was for \$5, too, were others, Cholly rejoined.

"One of his (Duke's) most enthusiastic listeners—and applauders—was the stunning Mrs. Samuel Barker, who rushed up to him after the concert was over to express her great delight at his program. No one looked livelier that evening than Samson Barker . . ."

Back to the "low" atmosphere of the Casino Club Duke engaged in March, a public success on New York's East Side, but a sensation on the other side of town. This new show, with even more supporting acts than the first downtown bill, was considered a greater triumph for Duke than the Hotel Mueser-Nobelster Southern collaboration had been. There he was playing background music and broadcast. Here, the band played Ellington all night long. The name for the show was Duke's, and one of his most effective.

There was a lot of specialty stuff for the show's featured performers. The Fanny Brown, Peg Leg Bates, Miss Johnson, the Choccolaters, Arda Ward, Anne and Almond, and the chorus line. Sometimes in New York was written for the Fanny. "I'm Happier Everest Avenue with the Role of My Show was for Peg Leg Bates. Crooked as Carolina was a chorus number. The Crooked, which was called "Crooked" used it was revealed, was for the "grand finale." The Casino Club Parade of 1935 had for dance hours as a possible successor to the Lady May,

the *Swing-3*, *Tractor*, *Puckie* and other recorded jazz dance songs which the Club had originated in its rooms. There were some pulled ballad numbers which got nowhere in or out of the room and then the three masterpieces of the state.

Swing-3 at first was just their first, the trumpet, then the washboard, then later into it more. The whole two songs in this booklet more, too, but in a different way. I Let a Song Go Out of My Mouth and If You Were in My Heart are winning much better, both have in a touch of Johnny Hodges' graceful swing of also path. The first was a reworking of Johnny's song into an *Swing-3* style of the first, the second strictly a jazz. Both earned lyrics by one of Ellington's prime characters, Henry Nervy. Nervy, a wild dancer about age possibly, was a singer, dancer, comedian and songwriter, who entertained anywhere, anytime, in club dances, rag parties, or nights on the street in front of the Brill Building, site of a working majority of the country's song-publishing firms. His rascal poems were always good for a few laughs, from the heart buried deep below all that funk came some sensitive songwriting, too. For Duke he turned out several excellent lyrics. For himself, he wrote two of the lowdown popular songs ever written, *Duke's Take Your Love from Me* and *The Duke's*. It was hard in 1938, and it still is, to measure the Nervy, whose brand of hot wit is famous (for example, his self-discipline, "The Nervy is on the Nervy"), whose speech, even when the recorder is unimpeachably swift, drips a conversational pace, with delicate images and soft metaphors. But the man who claimed he put the hot in hot poems was capable of just such thinking and feeling and execution, and his collaboration with Duke was more successful.

At the Cotton Club, Duke renewed acquaintance with Will Votey, the natural arranger who had been one of the big boys on Horace England's staff. Votey directed a choir in the '38 *Chorus Club Parade*, and he and Duke spent much time at rehearsals consulting. They thought back and talked back to their old. They talked over a lot of Folies. Votey had been the musical supervisor of just about every England show from 1925 to 1932, a dignified, quiet man who worked behind the

scenes. After England died he went to work for Rodolf Friml, Jerome Kern and Fox Films. This was the man Duke had always claimed had taught him almost all he knew about orchestration.

"Lookin' that man," Duke said, pointing to Will Votey, speaking to Cooke.

"Lookin'." Cooke said.

"I can remember when he had a rehearsal in the old England days, all the great arrangers on Broadway were in the audience listening to the new Votey arrangements. Why?"

"Oh yes," Cooke said, "why?"

"Because it each of the rehearsals something new came out."

"You said to be there a lot," Will said.

"Yes, I was," Duke said, "but I wasn't one of the regular audience boys."

"Why not?" Cooke asked.

"Because I was not accepted as an arranger in that line. I was writing out many parts of those publishing songs. But regular audience boy or not, Will was a strong influence on me. His chromatic conductance penetrated my ear and are largely responsible for the way I think music, even today."

The Votey influence is not so be underrepresented in any analysis of Duke's music. Duke had little direct contact with the main stream of traditional music. Will had had, and he made, vital contributions of one England score after another collected Debussy and Ravel and one or two more ancient tunes in contemporary music, rehearsed them and their antecedents. He was a school musician, with a variety of influences extending back to arranging for John Philip Sousa and leading a military band during the First World War. From Votey, Duke derived a feeling for the permanent consciousness of Claude Debussy and his followers. From Votey, as he says himself, he drew his chromatic convictions, his use of the more extremely extensive to the classical scale, with the consequent advantage of the harmonic character of his music, its broadening, the deepening of his resources. It has become customary to ascribe the major classical influences upon Duke—Debussy and

Delaney and Revel-to-direct contact with their music. Actually, his serious appreciation of their and other modern composers came after his meeting with Will Vodry, after his years as, first an irregular, then a steady "customer boy." Vodry had already synthesized the classical experience and translated it into the terms of the musical comedy pit band. It was more easily assimilable for Duke in those terms and made the more of an impression upon him than it would have in its original form. No, the Vodry influence is not to be underestimated.

When Duke met up with Will again in 1928, he was himself a well-rounded musician, a composer, an actor, and only upon the pattern of our case, but upon classical musicians as well. Duke was, according to *Life* magazine, one of the "Twenty Most Prominent Negroes in the United States," playing only one other musician in that select list, William Christopher Handy, the "Father of the Blues," and William Grant Still, around my computer in traditional forms, whose *Lesson Airway Suite* and *Afro-American Symphony* had become part of many symphony orchestral permanent repertoires.

As a "prominent" composer, Duke was invited to write some large-scale works for other audiences. Paul Whiteman asked five young American composers, in 1928, to contribute pieces to a suite of ball tunes, tunes which suggested or employed the notes of bells, the organism of the changing season, tunes which were in some way inspired by bells. He asked Freddie Griffith, his old bandily, Raymond Scott, whose sax man Quantel had made its debut on Minton Karmali's first list, sharing bell-like hooves with the Ellington bandy Ben Shaban, a clarinetist and radio strapper of good standing, Walter Cross, a single player and radio counterpoint of similar reputation, and Duke.

Duke, in character, wrote of very different bells, of *The Blue Bellies of Harlem*, a title which in a degree reflected the sound of bells, it rang with multiple meaning. It was a paraphrase of *The Bluebellies of Scotland*, of course. It employed the requisite word in its title, bell-like, it spoke of Harlem's brown bellies as blue, blue with melancholy, and, in effect, compared them with

the flower, the bluedie! The music was written like the slide, off the tongue just released from chains. It was scored for piano and orchestra, with heavy doses assigned to the keyboard section. Light in touch, it was presented with precision like a kick and a touch of spirit, with a kind of plaintive nostalgia. Performed at its Carnegie Hall debut under Whiteman, *The Blue Bellies of Harlem* made its deepest impression on an audience five years later, when Duke played it at his first Carnegie concert.

Duke played from 1929, a recognized "major influence." The dates the band played were still beneath the dignity and nature of the man at the head of it and those who followed the lead of his foot and the stroke of his pen. In New York, they did no better than Leno's band, best of the Broadway dancers which accompanied them with song shows. There were considerable sounds of marriage, it seemed, with no end in sight, New England, to New York, to New Orleans. There was no longer a run at the Casino Club to interrupt the marriage-sound, the downtown spot had folded—there just wasn't enough attention of the soldier of Ellington and Calloway and Waters and Robinson, apparently, to keep the place going between engagements of those times.

There had been twenty-seven records in the preceding two-year period (not counting unissued), and only one very large success, *I Let a Song Go Out of My Mouth*. The musical level of the other fifty-three sides was very high, but the market for the discs actually was smaller than that for the records of the Duke unit. Johnny's especially. Duke composed one of his more melismatic works, *Crescende and Decrescende in Blue*, a bright exploration of the expressed dynamics within the blues frame. Most of the critics were puzzled by it, reflecting their inadequacy and the low state of jazz criticism rather than any deficiency in the music. Today, some of the best writing sounds rhythmically self-balanced, but the basic laws of the *Crescende and Decrescende* are if anything more obvious, our ears having become accustomed to more rigorous experimental-

noon on the part of jazz bands. Even after many years, some of the moving and powerful great influences for the saxophonists and trumpeters.

Buck covered *Black and Tan Fantasy* as a two-part work. The additional members of the American Record Company used the two parts on separate records and the second part first. He did some very slight things, such as *La De Dooty Do*, in collaboration with Edward J. Lambert and Stephen Mitchell, as words followed the continuity of Billy De Back's syndicated dance strip, *Barney Google*, which in July, 1935, was circulating freely through swing. Duncan Hargrove explained this correspondence with someone's syllabification in his syndicated column:

"*La De Dooty Do* is the name of a new song. Really do not blame us. It is the trend of the times. When you hear a fellow changing something that may strike you as strictly Duke, he may be conveying a message in swing language quite intelligible to millions of listeners—like *La De Dooty Do*. They tell us it is a hit." It wasn't a hit, millions of listeners did not find it intelligible—millions of listeners did not find it. But it might very well strike you as strictly Duke.

Records like *The Lambock Walk*, *Love is Rhapsody* and *Watermelon Man* might very well strike one as strictly warlike at Duke's talents and his bands. But there were no-ups, such no-up: *The Lambock Walk* was, of course, the Gershwin dance step which was imported to this country by a wide range of entrepreneurs, dance teachers, song publishers, record company executives. To the Lambock walkers "Oy!" American musicians replied, "Oy, oy!" and the dance died on its feet. *Love is Rhapsody* was the title of a serial romance placed under Tommy Dorsey's byline in the *Heaven papers* and whenever other journals wished to purchase the gay tale from the King Features Syndicate. As a song for Ellington, it was a and expression: as neither was romance nor did it swing.

But there were mistakes. The general product of the years 1937 and 1938 was first-rate. The instrumental works, *Greenade and Dimensions* and the Cotton Club score and *The New Black and Tan*, were followed by such handsome exphers

sons of action and solo sound as *Flying on a Blue Bird*, *Lost in Meditation*, *The Cat from Joe's*, *Profile in a Kiss*, *Blue Light*, *Talkin' Ears*, *Please Forget Me* and *Pony Wilson*. The most was, as Duke himself put it, in one of his song tales. *Why Love, Why Love*, *Love Love*, *Love Love*, *Love Love*. From solo piano to better complaints, the music expressed unhappy Duke was *For a Man*, he and *Tom Cow's Count on Me*. The best recorded something as *Love Love*, but the sentiment was Billy Scaphere's, not Ellington's. It introduced Scaphere to the Ellington organization.

Smashing in Love for also introduced Joan Eldridge. Joan was, like Scaphere, from Pittsburgh. But she came by way of Baltimore. He came directly from the Brooklyn Corp. Joan was one of two "real discoveries" made by Duke in 1935. One was Dolores Brown of Brooklyn, the other, Joan. Both played several dance tunes with the band, not replacing Irene, just supplementing her. Dolores didn't last very long, she was prettier than she was able, and she soon departed the Ellington organization to make her way among some lower bands and as a single attraction in small night clubs. Joan lasted a little longer: she was, and is, an excellent singer, with an intriguing vibrato and a very good sense of song meaning and style. There is more of her on Teddy Wilson's records than on Duke's: she joined Teddy's brilliant big band after leaving Duke in 1939. Though Duke wasn't ready, in 1939, to carry several vocalists with his band, he had really made a discovery in Joan Eldridge.

There were experiments, like the "discovery" of singing solo and the temporary abandonment of the talent in his original section, to replace Duke. The coming of Scaphere was an experiment, the full significance of which Duke didn't perhaps entirely appreciate, but he did give Billy the widest possible encouragement. And he was taken over the Ellington family household, moving in with Marion and Ruth. There was Ruth's trip to Europe. And there were the solid mailed achievements of his own. But Duke was done. He passed this world's night.

Things had happened. For every good break Duke got

there was one equally bad. The things that happened seemed to happen at the lightning invitation of a foppish fate. When people die and close family see themselves, when every attempt to meet the inevitability of destiny half-way is turned to disaster, things aren't right. Duke had felt that some dire punishment was in store for him if he were to take Mildred with him on the first trip to Europe, that would have been too much pleasure, so much more than he was entitled to. But even though he had practiced a large degree of self-denial, his life seemed to consist in the when and how of threats into a grab-bag.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

SADDEST TALE

SADDEST TALE told on land or sea
Is the tale they tell
When they tell the truth on sea

THAT WAS THE "MORAL SPEECH" DUKE TALKED, CHUCKLED, OR SMOOKED, looking, feverish, wild on a second night in 1935. The record was called Saddest Tale. It was made barely before the death of Duke's mother, at a hard time for Duke. Life was very, very hard for him in the years between November, 1937, when J. E. died, and March, 1939, when she had called her Europe upon.

The death of Duke's father was not without interest. J. E. had lived intensely, he had lived almost as fast a life as his son. He'd been worried about that cough, but Duke's taken it too seriously. The summer of 1937 he went away to the Catskills, for the cleanliness and firmness and regularity of mountain air. But even up there, with the serene atmosphere of a summer resort, friends around him and a measure of pleasant ease, he was no less. Ever since his wife's death, he and Edward had been very close. Any time the band came back to New York, he rushed down to the city to spend a few days with Duke. Like an eager son, he slipped into Duke's baggage to see what gifts he had brought back from his cross-country travels, to see what new revelations he had made for himself or the home or Ruth or Marvin. The family was a tight unit, and J. E. Duke's was to see a moment of its gay unity.

When he returned from the Catskills in the fall, Uncle Ed, at fifty-eight, was not in good shape. His lips were drawn and his

back was lagged. He was suffering. The cough turned to a clearly diagnosed case of pleurisy. The pleurisy turned to pulmonary emphysema, to a chronic tuberculosis, the condition of which could not be stopped. Uncle Ed went up to Frisby-terrier Hospital at the Columbia University Medical Center, 1515th Street and Broadway, not far from his home on Edgecombe Avenue. Duke spent a lot of time with him. There wasn't much time left. On a Thursday night in early November, at 1:15, he died, his children beside him.

Ruth, a year from the completion of her studies at New College of Columbia University, came up pretty well under the stress of her father's death. She managed funeral arrangements, the service at the New York funeral parlor and that in Washington, as the John Wesley A. M. E. church to which J. E. had belonged all of his life.

Duke didn't take it nearly so well. For a long time, he did no composing. He went through the routine appointments, doctors, newspapers, talked about doing the same for a bullet for the Heller House, talked with pleasure at the window at the band post in the English magazine. The *Melody Maker*, in which his orchestra topped all others—Sonny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, following behind him. In his own country the post results weren't so good, but then Duke's brother Duke too much.

He was able to joke with politicians, with teachers, with politicians. His sense of humor did not desert him. Meeting the City Manager of Knoxville, a week after J. E.'s death, Duke compared cases with him. He discovered that the Manager was running for Mayor.

The Manager discovered that it was Duke who had written *Mixed Bedops*.

"You," said Duke, "we wrote it," citing out the copy that the board "was."

"A very fine piece of work," the City Manager commented.

"I hope I won't have to play *Mixed Bedops* for you after the election," Duke said.

"You won't," the City Manager answered him, laughing.

There was added satisfaction in this fact that she had

when newspaper of Knoxville, the *Journal*, printed a picture of Duke and the candidate for Mayor together. Satisfaction? Maybe not. After all, a picture with Duke was good campaign material for the man. It would go a long way toward getting the vote of such Negroes as were allowed to go to the polls.

There was little satisfaction in what was happening to Arthur Whelan. The chief of Duke's management in years of service, his friend and associate all the way back to Washington began, came, was in very poor health, he had been for a few years. Shortly before Duke left the Coast in 1939, after making *The Mir Fatale* at Republic, he played *Whelan*.

"It's bad news, baby," Duke told Mildred.

"What do you mean, what do you mean?" she asked seriously.

"About Arthur. Sweet Duke."

"What about Arthur?" But Mildred knew.

"He's pretty far gone," Duke said.

"My God," she said.

"You'll have to prepare Marguerite," Duke said.

"I know," Mildred said, "I will."

Arthur's wife would have to know, of course. Mildred went to see her.

"Arthur's such a proud man," Marguerite said. "He wouldn't go to a doctor when he might have saved himself all this pain. He wouldn't even admit he could be that sick."

"He's very sick," Mildred said, "very sick. His insides have just been eaten up, he's lived so hard and worked so hard. And Duke says it's gone to his brain. You must hear up, darling—but sometimes, Duke says, he doesn't make any sense at all, just ramble."

"Oh my God," Arthur Whelan's wife said, "my God."

Arthur returned to New York. That's where Danny Baker and Wallace Jones came into the hotel, from Danny, then Mildred. And the position of head trumpet disappeared as importance. Arthur's sweet tone and coaxing attractiveness were not displaced in that dark month years later, when Sherry Baker joined the band. And Duke was further adduced, further weakened, made to feel his life was further without hope.

Arthur suffered for three years, tapered through 1939 and into 1940, when the last metastasis in his brain stopped and he went. Another tax with the Washington post was broken. Another balcony against the problems and perils of the house was broken. Duke was almost broken. Accident sale. . . .

There was another loss. Freddy Jenkins, one since 1915 with tuberculosis, came back briefly in 1937. He didn't last very long.

"Doe says I'm all right. Mama I'm all right to blow horns," Freddy said.

"Garry is over," Duke commented.

"Don't hurt yourself, Percy," the boys said, "please."

"Never fear," Freddy said, and bowed his acknowledgment of his colleagues' concern.

But Freddy did hurt himself. His lungs weren't up to the severe strain of day and night blowing, the massive activity of the big Elfragon band at 1937. He perished from some of the direct disease of wind instrumentalists, particularly the high flying, chest-confounding jazz hornmen. For months and months he lay on his back, dead, for a man of his character, in the world, has previously done so Duke, who secured special kits, made sure he had every assurance, as he had with Arthur Whited. Freddy had to live. He had to live. He had no Yarn later, Freddy recovered. His illness had been using, fraught with dramatic crises and life-saving medication. But Freddy wanted to live and he did.

Duke was almost without resources for family life. His mother died, his father died, his close friends in the band, Arthur and Freddy, sadly said. Then, in 1944, the May following J. E.'s death, Ruth left for a summer in Europe, to study in Paris. She was taking her Master's degree at Columbia University Teachers College and wanted to supplement her work in field copy with study abroad. Duke felt that Europe was the thing for her, as it had been and would be again for him. With Mrs. Maude Bagshaw, an old family friend, as companion, Ruth sailed on the S.S. Washington. Duke was left with Willie

Meaning, his chauffeur, "man," assistant landlady and friend, as he family that summer.

"Now is the time to get that operation done," Arthur Logan.

Duke's new doctor, advised.

"You're on," Duke answered. In the past he had been reluctant to attend to his own medical needs, though very attentive about the pains and ills of others. "Must have a specialist," Duke always said, as soon as the symptoms of anything's illness became fairly specifically apparent. For himself, a mild dosage of anything that might soothe his pain and calm his disposition was sufficient. But after the death of his parents, he was much more concerned about himself. He knew that, as Arthur Logan had said, this was the time to have the hernia surgery performed. And so it was.

As with most of the events, small and large, in Duke's life, great economy attended the preliminary arrangements and the subsequent consummation in hospital and home. He was much photographed at the Washington Hospital in midtown New York, about drinking some manuscript paper to his house. He was moved graciously by the side of his bed, looking even younger than he was because of a bright bow tie. The photographers asked their questions and snapped the pictures. Duke looking happily paternal, right index finger pointing to the air as he admonished Morton.

"Now grow up," he told Morton. "and be a great companion." Duke laughed.

"As you say, Father Duke!" Morton smiled back.

When he left the hospital, it was with full courage, Arthur Logan, his doctor, Jerry Allen, his wife, Jimmy, his wife, and Morton. They passed leaving the hospital and arriving at the house. Once home, there was the same round of visitors there had been at the hospital. Interviewers came to seek information of future plans.

"What was, Duke?" they asked.

He answered as he always had for three or four years. "My African Duke for parts. Africa is the present; the ill-

story of the American Negro." He pythically decided the work which eventually became *Black, Brown and Beige*. For years it was "just stories of completion," "just a few pages to go," "almost done." While it was in this state, Duke hastened the progress of the work. He'd done a line of solid thinking about it at the hospital. Soon, now, he said to himself, soon.

There wasn't much time to work on Duke's *Three F's*. There were so many unpleasant little details. And none not so little. The personal affairs. The business affairs. And sales.

For some years, the Negro press had been taking shots at Duke's business arrangement with Irving Mills—first with a foreboding, then, along with the rest of the world, warm for the colored papers adopted a program of berry cream—Foster Robinson in his column of "Facts and Comments" in the *Pittsburgh Courier* had something to say.

"Early Nelson (a very fine white man in all respects) who made big time in 1928. He is now worth over \$1,000,000," Roberts began. "Duke Ellington made it about the same time and has EARNED something like \$1,000,000—for somebody else. . . ." Roberts was also concerned about another thing. "No Negro writer has written the lyrics for any of Duke Ellington's melodies since he has been under the Duke banner. What's the matter, Duke's House rules?"

Duke always turned aside criticism of Mills. He was grateful to him for early financial support, for wise business counsel, for an association which, he really believed, had been directly responsible for his phenomenal success. Irving had early seen the wisdom of enlarging the band, had created its best bookings, arranged first-class recording trips. He was a suspicious banker of talent, he had spent Lawrence Brown in a flash when at Schenck's, put together some of Duke's best songs there. He had profited, himself, yes, but so had Duke. After all, as he said himself, many times, with all the dough he spent, at home on the road, for the family, there wasn't much left, there couldn't be. Nevertheless, in 1935, he left Mills.

The immediate cause of the separation of Ellington and Mills was "lack of attention." That was Duke's complaint and that

of his weakness. The band wasn't giving enough of Irving's time, they said, now that he had become such a big publisher and banker of close to a dozen outlets, large and small. And then there was the afternoon Duke walked into Mills' office.

"May I see my books?" he asked one of the executives. He walked in, her and she brought out the books.

Duke sat down at the table and looked through all the books of Duke Ellington large-printed, the record of his business transactions with Irving Mills. He looked at almost every page, at some with greater interest than others, at the reports on his best-selling records and those which hadn't sold so well, at the results of the theater booking and the business stand, the *Cotton Club*, East and West, Europe and short months from coast to American coast.

"Thank you very much," Duke said to the secretary, after less than an hour's poring over the books of Duke Ellington Inc. He got up slowly, adjusted his jacket and tie, put on his hat and overcoat and walked out of the office. He never returned. In the spring of 1935, Duke signed a contract with William Morris, the oldest and greatest of the movieville and radio booking agencies, in that time making a belated reference into the past business.

Duke was uncertain about his business future, William Morris was very sure in the field. The firm had engaged Willard Alexander, who, as a minor resource at the Music Corporation of America, had risen to an important position in the trade as a result of his brilliant booking of the Benny Goodman orchestra and his general placing of other jazz outfits under the MCA banner. MCA was the largest of the band-booking agencies, the best at once the field as strength. Willard's experience with MCA was first-rate and his record was impressive. He should be a big help, Duke thought, for Willard was going to build up the William Morris band department. He was being very over the Coast Town band, he and his friend Benny Goodman's pet outfit. Would Duke again suffer from "lack of attention"?

There was a lack of attention in other phases of Duke's life

Mildred, she and Duke had never had very serious words together. "Just the normal spots of married couples," Mildred always explained it. But now, with the several arrivals upon Duke, there was a serious situation. He and Mildred didn't talk things over as much as they had. He was so busy with his changing business affairs, so uncertain about his family life, so generally mixed up.

Mildred had heard about a girl who was crazy about Duke and for whom Duke seemed to have some affection. Ben Ellis, a handsome stranger at the downtown Cotton Club, had appeared upon a lot of some of the place with him.

"There's something there," Mildred told Duke one afternoon at the Apollo.

"I think there is," Duke said.

"Do you love her?" Mildred asked Duke.

"I think I do," Duke said.

"All right," Mildred said, "you do as you think best."

Early in 1939, Mildred gave Duke his freedom and Ben Ellis became Mrs. Killington. They moved over to a new apartment at 939 St. Nicholas Avenue. There was something fresh about new surroundings, something fresh and new and hopeful about a new life. Duke looked up from his aching joints with new interest.

A great adjustment was made all around. Ruth and Marjorie remained at 615 Edgewood, and Billy Beaphere, who had just come in from Pittsburgh, mixed in with them. Gradually, Duke moved his belongings over to his new apartment and Mildred left for Boston after eleven years with Killington. Great adjustments to make, too.

Duke noted the Europe with hope. Just as the last time, this was to be a reintegration, he hoped, a look at the cultural values of the old world. He would come back refreshed, to start again, with new management, new relations, new music, start again to try

Sadder tale told us last of us
Is the tale they told
When they told the truth to us,

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

SMORGASBORD AND SCHNAPPS

THE JEROME TRIP TO EUROPE WAS A WEEK, A BRILLIANT seven days on the cabin-class French liner, the *Champagne*. Duke recovered his appetite of champagne and beauty as being maintenance for life at sea and backed his words with sizable portions of the potage. The *Champagne* carried only seventy-five passengers to Europe, and hundreds of staterooms of boudoirs dotted the France. This was March, 1939, and no boat left Europe without a bulging load of people bound for America. Ben transferred took the place of the seventy-five on the return trip from Le Havre.

At Le Havre, the land was met by hundreds of French Ellington enthusiasts, screaming, shouting their enthusiasm. They carried all the bags in the special bus, even which took them from the airport to Paris.

"Look at this train," Tricky called to Toby.

"See it," Toby agreed.

"Just look," Tricky repeated. "Mmm."

"Mmm what?"

"The design. What strengthening?"

Throughout the European tour of thirty-four days the Ellington musicians were appalled at the too-dry lines of most designs, at the dramatic simplicity of the modern furniture and interior design on the Scandinavian continent, at the vigorous good taste of the classical designs. It was the display of European theater design which impressed them, the baroque

and rooco-orchestration vying with the chase modern for excitement, and both getting plump.

On their first night in Paris, Friday, March 30, Duke and the boys "rehearsed." They were told hands as the horns and lances of Panacea might take this time: after all, they'd spent a couple of days more than a week in France in 1935. Over more they were *paliers de rehearsal*, the one society of which they dared to be pillars. Over more they suffered from real ear-chirpers and in *parade de leur dieu* entering Henry entered his *voies de l'organe* early in the trap. By the time they got to Sweden, the doctors were warning him.

The next day followed the same routine, drinking, coming on time, taking one note, springing it up, getting talked, planned. But there was delivery and tang to their drinking, an art of getting talked which these musicians had mastered over many years. There were some surprises in the border, sudden reactions they were not expecting; sometimes more strength than pep, sometimes more joy than strength. It was all very delightful and nobody actually was possessed by the unexpected or the unexpected effect of some of the new *l'organe*. Duke maintained as even a fact that he was able to handle the pure confidence that Sunday afternoon with equal, measured uplift. And even more the pure was entirely unexpected, warm, finished.

On Sunday, the band trained at Boulogne for morning and evening concerts. The Palais des Beaux Arts, the Belgian capital's biggest and most beautiful concert hall, was sold out, and the packed audience welcomed and puffed with excited approval of the music.

Between the morning and evening performances, the management of the Palais des Beaux Arts gave a reception in the hall's grill room for the band. The grill room was filled with friends, admirers and newspaper friends. For more than an hour, Duke and his musicians picked up drinks with their left hands and fountain pens with their right, answering to the taps with unwary cramped digits, but with sufficient enthusiasm to offset the physical discomfort.

Back in Paris the Monday and Tuesday concerts at the Palais de Chaillot, also known as the Marmottan Theatre, the Ellington musicians discovered a new type of theatre. The Chaillot was the world's only bombproof auditorium, constructed one foot below the Paris ground in anticipation of German bombs. The war had not yet started, but the French were apprehensive. In its subterranean condition every modern stage device had been incorporated. Duke moved as well as in magnificent splendor and favored with delight in its beautifully balanced situation as the band ran over a few pieces in rehearsal.

The concerts at the Chaillot were great success, well-balanced programs which were bound to please every Ellington fan, and did. With an "His Dances" in three the audience's applause, in destruction just which members had real concert music, or in any other way involved with the musical process. Paris audiences, like those here in Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark, were united in "the real Duke," as what Ellington himself wanted to play.

The routine stayed pretty much the same. There were the traditional pieces, *Rockin' in Rhythm*, *Rock and Tan Fantasy*, *Mind Judge*. There were the favorites, *Schostakovich's Nocturne*, *Christie's Lament*, *Trumpet in Spades*, *Locating Cocco* and *Barney* and *Rev. Lawrence Brown* played *Epitaph* and *Early* in a touching role and *John Tard* was presented in his dual role as naïve comedian and composer of *Commas*. There was the eight-year-old standard jumpy number, *Merry-Go-Round*, which Ellington had known as rounds before Duke's conversion, did, and of which they were especially fond. There was the perfectly named *Drunk in a Jam*, in which the chords of a very well-known song were subjected to strenuous pen treatment by improving means. And there was Duke's flag-waver of the moment, his strenuous violation of the theme of *Boys* *Rachmaninov's Prelude in G sharp minor*.

In Paris, the tremendous reception of the audience at the Palais de Chaillot was quickly followed by another of another kind. After the Monday night concert, there was a surprise party for Duke given by the Swedish-Corona Laps *Lars Larsson*.

banquet in her apartment in the arrangement of Flaubert, Puck's most exact, most humorously developed residential vision. The Ducaine, who was a spent and restless contrastist as well as an ardent admirer of the music of the Ellington band, threw a lunch affair with great care and resources paid to the tastes and idiosyncrasies of the audience. While Lewis, expertize American Negro musician whose little band had been the tip just outfit in Paris for many years, served as the Ducaine's assistant.

While seated in his own box on the band's standing nights in Paris, as he and the other American musicians who had been working in France and elsewhere on the continent found the Ellington ensemble. Arthur Briggs, the trumpeter, and Gerhard Wilson, the pianist, expatriated parties, both played and improvised. Jimmy Monroe, owner of the Swing Club, where most of France's outstanding persons played, gave an Ellington party. So did Gertrude Ballard, proprietor of the Armand's Bar and Restaurant. Musicians, French, American, of all the countries on the continent of Europe, thronged to hear the Ellington band and to drink with its musicians. Thus once again belonged the leader and his men.

Immediately after the first Paris concert, a young French woman rushed backstage. She told Duke how much she had enjoyed his concert. She was very pretty and Duke gave her his warmest regards.

"It was simply wonderful," she said, "merveilleux, extraordinaire, fantastique!"

"The delight that we played you in some small way," Duke acknowledged and bowed in courtly European manner.

The attractive young woman clasped her hands and looked very serious. "I would like to have your picture," she said. "If you don't give me one I shall die."

"No, no," Duke said, "not that." He signed a picture for her immediately, with a particularly florid inscription.

"We should receive the Legion of Honor decoration," Tricky commented.

"Why?" Tricky asked.

"For saving a woman's life," Tricky answered.

Before leaving Paris, the boys in the band did almost everything. However, some of them made long phone calls to America, to their wives and mothers and friends.

Rex Brown and Billy Taylor and Barney Bigard combined trumpet, bass and clarinet with Django Reinhardt's gypsy guitar on four lovely record sides, three offshoots and one standard for the Swing label of the Hot Club of France. The standard was *I Know That You Know*, the originals were called *French*, *Montmartre* and *Low Capote*. When the band got back in the United States, Steve Lasker, who was then running the Hot Record Shop and putting up records with the HRC label, borrowed Rex's copies of these sides and dubbed them.

From France, the band went back to Belgium again, playing two concerts in the same evening, Thursday, April 6, at Antwerp. Next night, they played at The Hague in Holland, in the first of three concerts organized by the Dutch jazz magazine, *De Jazzwereld*. After the concert, Johnny Hodges, Sonny Greer and Tricky Sam got in with Jack de Vries' Dutch jazz band at the Taberna, and, as the local papers said, "gave Dutch fans the treat of their lives." Valaida, a trumpeter and singer who had made a stable reputation for herself in England and Europe, was singing at the Taberna with de Vries, and George Johnson, who had just left the Willie Lewis band, was the band's first star. Americans both, they were overwhelmed to see such successful fellow-countrymen and professional musicians. There was joy at the Taberna, The Hague, on April 8, again.

Next day, the band was due for two performances, neither in Ghent and evening performance in Amsterdam. In Amsterdam, the large hall was so crowded that there were two people seated on the stage. At the end of the show there was a real, literally death-defying rush for autographs. The autographing took two hours to complete. Trapping Duke on the chair which he had requested to give his hands writing freedom, the crowd surrounded him and he was pushed, and standing on the chest down the length of the concert hall. Reminded at last, Duke retired to his dressing room and the musicians went in there, but

there, too, the demand for autographs was unrelenting and the signing continued. In the confusion attending these circumstances a small boy was knocked down and crumpled underneath, very seriously hurt. That incident put an end to what Duke called "the post-mortem show."

To get to Denmark, the band had to travel through Germany. There were no bookings in officially anti-Nazi, anti-Jew Munich. Arriving in Hamburg on Sunday the night, the boys looked around for the shops to take down the Danish pennants. No shops. For seven hours the band waited for the train that didn't come. Waiting for the ghost train, the band wandered around the city by night. The city was swarming with uniformed members of the Wehrmacht and the labor-uniformed army men and soldiers of the Hitler Guard of the Nazis, it was Kaiser. Though there was no marked welcome to the Americans at the hotel, it was a birthday and the spectacle in which the Nazis specialized was colorful, gay and infectious. The Ellington musicians didn't join in the drinking, but they did go looking for hamburgers. This was Hamburg—must have the best hamburgers in the world.

"Jew-ill," Sonny told himself, bawling with joy at the opportunity to see his high-school German.

At a small Hamburg restaurant some of the musicians ordered hamburgers. They took a few bites.

"Well, I'll be damned!" suddenly said.

"Ask, the fellow!" Sonny murmured.

They had taken good care of what tasted for all the world like burnt wood. Maybe it was burnt wood. It was really hamburger. Hamburg did not have the best hamburgers in the world.

After eating and looking around and peeing, retelling stories in exaggerated importance at the train which never showed up, Duke decided to charter a bus to take them to Denmark. He got one and they continued on their way. By the next day they made Malmö, Sweden, after having taken seven trains, two big ferries and a bus.

At Malmö and Helsingborg and Copenhagen, the celebra-

tion for the band was sensational. In Copenhagen, seven people turned out for two performances and then the band went back to Sweden and the next morning four of that country ever made by a band, dance orchestra, American or European or Swedish. From April 11 to May 2, the Ellington organization played numerous concerts, in Gothenburg and Stockholm twice each, in Malmö, Helsingborg, Västerås, Karlstad, Örebro, Gäddede, Skövde, Uppsala, Västerås, Karlstad, Luleå, Helsingborg, Helsingborg, with a one-day extension to the Norwegian capital, Oslo, to play and to look.

All over Sweden, as in Denmark, Holland, Belgium and France after midnight changed to hear the band, to greet the bandmen by the band, to be drilled and to let those who drilled them know just how drilled they were. But the most exciting event of the trip for Duke was the occasion of his birthday birthday, April 29, in Stockholm.

In the morning, Duke was waking over in his sleep, just beginning to feel the effect of daylight, when a strange sound entered his room. He sat up as best as good in a cotton gown (purchased from the radio station, which entered his room and accosted him with the Swedish language version of Happy Birthday. All day long flowers arrived at the hotel. During the noon hours of the concert that day at the magnificent Concert House, Duke was presented with bouquets after bouquet of flowers, with the best wishes of hundreds of celebrities and well-wishers pouring in his dressing room. Then the entire audience rose to its feet and sang the Swedish Happy Birthday, after which ten little girls dressed as when marched up to the stage to sing Happy Birthday in Swedish, punctuating English.

That night a reception was arranged for Duke at Stockholm's famous Crown Prince Club. At the head of the room, a table set for forty had been prepared for Duke and his musicians and their friends. There was a tremendous birthday cake and everybody stood up while the band played one more song made to Ellington and everyone sang a song of celebration. Duke went to bed "very high and very happy."

Three days after his birthday, Duke sailed for London with

his band, a trip across the North Sea requiring one day. They couldn't play in London because of the restrictions on foreign artists, but they did have seven hours to rehearse some old acquaintances and make promises to come back sometime soon, perhaps with the special permission of the Ministry of Labour, to play as well as to party. If, on this trip, the band couldn't play, Duke at least could have the satisfaction of hearing and making the intense disaffection of Englishmen with their Labour Ministry. "British fans of Duke Ellington, pushing their backs because their Nation did it not allowed a permit to work in England, are following his homecoming tour of West Europe with breathless interest," the *Melody Maker* said. "We know it is inevitable that the Duke and his boys will present just as he very best," the paper continued. "There is nothing new in hearing that the audience is thrilled to death about it and we are very anxious that we can't enjoy the same treat in this country."

A few of the hopelessly married old correspondents in London, Duke says they "had to be passed on the train," the best train which was to take the band to Southampton. On the train, Bunny looked himself in the bathroom and promptly fell asleep and nobody could get in. It was a memorable cross trip.

They sailed homeward on the *Le de France*, sailing to the home of the Compagnie Generale Transatlantique, the French Line, for the European trip. The ship's funds were stuffed with big payoffs in gold, \$25,000,000 of French, \$25,000,000 of British, demanded for the United States and safe keeping. Duke, too, carried a good portion of the payoffs around back with him. The tour had been a tedious success. Millions all over, no unpleasantness anywhere. As no point was there a shortage of prejudice displayed in the people of Western Europe turned out to disapprove in Duke Ellington and company. From Bunny at the back of the band to Duke and five or more, the trip had been magnificent.

When the band returned in New York, at early recording sessions, Duke made permanent some of his strong sentiments about the trip. *Unsubdued and Unhappy* was a tribute to Sw-

dish beer-fountains and whisky. *Brennende in Berlin* was just that, a lively melody which expressed Duke's thoughtful feeling for the country and its people. On that evening, he took cognomen of the growing war tension with, *The Sergeant Was My*, a bright brass fanfare on the theme of Eagle-Cat Rag.

Duke was a changed man as a result of the European trip. Besides, just as everything possible had happened so long time down in the years before, 1933 and 1934 and early '35, now all the things that were happening changed him. There was Billy Straphorn, his new manager, the brilliant words he was writing and the charm of his person. There was a new home with Ben. And the William Morris arrangement looked good. The band was having its no engagement at Boston's Lighthouse hotel, the East-Carlton; good bookings after that, too, Chicago, the Coast. There was a new Victor contract. There were heart-warming things, but above all, that European trip.

"Europe is a very different world from this one," Duke explained. "You can go anywhere and talk to anybody and do anything you like. It's hard to believe. When you're even hot dogs all your life and you're suddenly offered water with hard to believe it's true."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

WEELY

STRAIGHT WAS THE BIG NEW TOWN IN DUK'S LANE, WHEN he returned from Europe. "Weely," as they called Billy or Willie Stephenson, was living with Ruth and Morrie in Duke's old apartment. Little (five feet three) steadily built (135 pounds), Billy was like another member of the family because of his size, his soft manner, his large, intense eyes behind thick glasses, he seemed like the youngest, though he is actually four years older than Duke's son, and some months older than his sister.

Stephenson's background is in the great Negro tradition. His mother's grandfather had been General Robert E. Lee's cook. His father's grandparents had also been slaves. He remembers his great-grandfather, who was pure Indian, because that remarkable man was able to pick up anything with his bare shut a natural person could with his hands, he would pull something right out of little Billy's hands with his feet, though Billy forced himself and held on with all his young strength. His wife, whom Billy called "Grandma" Gray, though she was actually a grandmother beyond that, used to sit by the stove in a chair a short distance away from the great fireplace. As an old woman, she arranged things skillfully so that she never had to move, with long legs she could manipulate any of the food she had cooking over the great fire. When the food was done, it is needed to be kept hot for some time, she would pull out a heap of coals and build a fresh mound on the hearth, then she would set the food on top as was to serve.

Grandma Stephenson, Billy's father's mother, was Billy's prime parent until he was ten, when she died. His father had left

home when Billy was eleven. "Wonderful," he explained, "plain ole wonderful." Home was Hillsboro, North Carolina; the home was three blocks from the railroad station, but very far from the town's industrial section, not quite the lovely location in which Grandma Gray's home was set down by the river, but attractive. Not attractive enough, however, for Billy's father who had the wonderful. He sailed to York, Pa., then moved on to other towns in Pennsylvania and Ohio, finally settling down for a while in Dayton, from which he sent for his wife. There Billy was born, second child of the Scaphorn to live, two others had died before Billy, two others died after him, no third, altogether.

"At five," Billy explains, "I moved in with my Aunt ("Oma," he says) in Monroeville, New Jersey. And then I spent the rest of my little years on moving." He mentioned between Monroeville and North Carolina and the small suburb outside Pittsburgh where his father finally settled.

Most important of the three homes continued to be Hillsboro, N. C., until Grandma died, Billy's every need and hope and wish were attended to closely. If he woke in the night with a slight cough or a hollowing cough, Grandma Lasser had the remedy. It was a cool white milk, something that looked like Marmosa and felt like Mashed. Grandma made a bark of it on her finger and put it on Billy's lips. "Wellnow that, Williams," she said, and he did and he was cured. Maltogen syrup was another cough remedy, a delicious cooling syrup that looked like a very pale molasses and tasted even better, made from molasses lasses. Grandma had a remedy for everything and a wonderful way of doing everything. When she looked clothing, she always looked the shirt and underwear and dresses with plain needles and moved the hemstitching across into the under- and over-stings. And she supervised a weekly fire, as Grandma everybody in the house washed after church, to make rich hot cream and so on it. Little Billy amazed, learned all his strength was relying the un-crown character moved on as time. When his strength gave out, Grandma took over as father and mother for the Sunday week. It was a happy time.

Pittsburgh was not the warm, moist atmosphere that Hillsboro had been. Billy's father was away a good deal, removing his handiwork all from the household at irregular intervals, taking away that imposing head, gray topped with a solid stack of black down the center. The family was huge, spread all over the house, the house in Brookbrook, Rooking, Stone-wood, the three Pittsburgh districts in which the Scryphens lived. But for all the crowding, my big brother in a big way would experience, for all the limitations of this life after the middle splendor of Hillsboro, Pittsburgh was fun for Billy and an experience of sufficient magnitude to leave him with at least a slight personal affection for the place.

Billy was born on November 29, 1909, fourteen years later he took up his first career, soda jerk and odd job boy in a Pittsburgh drug store. His head didn't rise very high above the soda fountain, but he was an able dispenser of the sweetmeats and tender powdered-ice cream and syrup and nutmeg whipped cream and fruit. He was good enough to hold his job for eight years, during which time he completed elementary and high school. At high school, he studied harmony, outside school he took piano lessons with a private teacher. By his middle years, Billy was well acquainted with traditional melody he played many of the Chopin Waltzes and Preludes on piano virtuoso, upon graduation from high school, he played Gung's A minor Concerto with the school orchestra.

The music of the traditional composers was Billy's first strong interest and his immediate musical background, but just was beginning to catch his ear as he rounded the twenty mark. He played some banjo and learned to work Pittsburgh auto-composers as Errol Garner, a brilliant young pianist whose style rambled intriguingly from Debussy to Duke Ellington. He wrote lyrics for songs, one that he occasionally still runs over his friends in parting, a sophisticated song in the Neal Coward manner, pretty far removed from Billy's life in the twenties, but none the less convincing thereby. The song is called *Lash Life*. It was one of several he played for Duke when he got to meet him in December, 1936.

Billy had heard the band a few times on records and on the air, but he'd never been so impressed with it as he was at the Stanley Theatre, Pittsburgh's best. The wide loose stockings, ensemble chords that sounded so full and loose and impressively experimental in timbre and sound, these things hit him.

"You know," Billy told a friend who knew Duke, "he's got something."

"Yeah," the friend replied, "I think so, too."

"I'd like to meet him," Billy longed to say.

Billy was taken backstage by his accommodating friend and introduced to Duke. Billy sat down at a backstage piano and ran over a few tunes, singing the lyrics to some of them as he played.

"I like that," Duke said about one of the songs, and another, and another. "Why don't you leave those with me?" he suggested. "Maybe we can do something with them."

"I can't," Billy said, "I haven't written them down," and he laughed in his own special way, as if he were making Duke into a delighted audience. Duke, who has a special liking for exercises, and particularly musical exercises, laughed with him.

"Maybe we'll see you here again," Duke suggested. "Or maybe you can come and see us in New York. I like your stuff."

Billy figured nothing would ever come of it, but he was heartened by Duke's words. About a month later he told a friend of his, an stranger named Bill Bach, that he was pleased if he wants going to take advantage of Duke's offer, no matter how unattractive it had been sounded. Bill said, surely, why not go to New York together. OK, they went, in February.

Duke had been primarily interested in Billy's lyrics, and when Bridgeman arrived in New York and brought some of them on to Duke, on paper, he was all set. One particularly impressed Duke, a tune of Billy's called *Something to Love for Me*. It was a perfect vehicle for Duke's style, newly set with the band, Duke figured, and a good tune for him, to arrange. Duke arranged it and just sang it and the record was so successful,

usually at least, that Ellington told Billy to go ahead and write music, words, any damn thing he wanted to. And today, as yesterday and a few months ago and a couple of years ago, back to 1935, when the record was made, if you ask Duke what is his favorite record, he will give you one of two answers. Either he will say, "My next one," or he will say, "Why, er, something is like for You, Something is Love for, Things kind of went on that record, King Roger Armstrong, Georgia, did you know that was Sonny Hebert's first record for us?"

Billy not only impressed Duke, he put along beautifully with his own and his crew. Billy moved in with Mercer and Ruth. He and Mercer began to "collaborate" together, as he called it, scoring Harlem's hot spots and those downtown on grand streets, drinking, talking, listening to music and discussing its commercial qualities. He and Duke talked about music. He and the boys in the band talked about music, and both Duke and they suggested he try a hand at making small band arrangements.

"I was scared," Billy recalls.

"Come on, old man," Duke suggested, "don't worry. Just write."

"I mean, Wreck," the Rhythm encouraged, "make something for me."

Billy made a number of small band sides, first for Johnny Hodges, then for the other Ellington unit leaders. For Johnny he did *Luke's Stop in the Night*, an ordinary pop tune which seemed real money under the melodramatic wrappings of Hodges' solo sax. As in his first big band record, Billy was given a fine assist by Juan Eldridge's lovely voice. Everybody was very pleased, pleased with the record and *Swing Street* and *You Can Count on Me*, with *Barney Gable's Day* and the *Moment in Morn*, which he did for a hoped-for *The Moment in Morn* was a genuine success and a genuine idea, a delicate combination of the rhythmic character of the concert and the chord changes which make the blues.

While Duke was in Europe, Billy delivered a suit box of

music, named with exquisite restraint, *Day Dream*. He scored it for full band, but, like hundreds of other Ellington and Sonny Hebert arrangements, it never achieved a permanent place in the band's books. As the first side made by Johnny Hodges' small band on Blackbird, however, it was an enormous success. It has been scheduled for some time for the commercial "re-release" process which has made, successfully, *Money He Lament* (Don't Get Around Much Any More), *Concrete for Concrete* (The Nothing You Hear from Me) and *Sacredental Lady* (I Didn't Know about You) have made him as popular a composer.

After Duke returned, Billy really brought his living materials, his luggage and papers, over to the band. He worked with the Ellington musicians, listened intently to each of them, those who played in the orchestra only, those who soloed. He pored over Duke's scores and took apart his writing and arranging technique, his amazing chords, his melodic line, his characterization of the various scenes, the growlers (Kendrick and Tricky Sam), the sweet voices (Lawrence Brown and Johnny Hodges and Juan Tizol), the music sounds (like above all, those Tricky and Kendrick), the depth of the band (Barney Cornett) and its power, most legitimate voice (Barney Bigard). He "dog" the doubling of Tricky lead also and Harry's under basses, in the music, and he understood quickly how important all of these roles were to the Ellington manner and method and made for years musicians have wondered at the making of other arrangers and composers in just to maintain Duke with any fidelity. After Sonny Hebert, they wondered at his something similarity to Duke, so great a similarity that it was more often than not impossible to tell who had written what. Since Billy's return, other bands have imitated Duke, but without the fidelity which makes his work. They have been able to duplicate Ellington harmonies—these are objective and susceptible to mathematical analysis. They have not been able to capture his colors and textures, his moods, as Billy has.

Billy's music is really no secret at all. Much of it lies in his close study of the music and his band, the music and the musicians. A lot lies in his affinity with Duke, the way he lives and

talks and, consequently, the way he writes. When the band returned from Europe, Billy went along on the summer trip to Boston, to play the Rut-Garban Hotel Room. On the way, writing with Duke, talking over men and women, women and music, the band, Doc Anderson, Duke suggested a lyric for *Jenny Come Back, I'm Chasin' You, Gonna Bye*. Duke and should be the title. Billy picked it up from there, wrote a lyric. Duke did the arrangement and the band recorded it for Columbia, the renamed Brunswick label (the Columbia Broadcasting System had bought the American Record Company, its assets, good will and blots). They appeared on a *Lonely Road*, in which the two men who had never been in college, had hardly ever been near one, caught the misery of a campus romance. While in Boston, Billy did a full arrangement for Doc, on the currently popular *Pumped' Jim*, and it pumped. He did some others, then did the full arrangement for *Katie's Myself*, one of Irish most successful records, a blousy confusion of a knickered out "chick," with band background which pumped the way the words and beat a wave and the music itself did. That did it. Billy was off set with the band.

From his very first work for the small bands, it was obvious that Stephenson was adept in the jazz chamber form. He took over all the small men dates, displaying Duke not only as arranger but as player on many. Further in our Duke remembrance assembly who played on which date, and it isn't always possible to tell from their playing which of the two men is at the keyboard. As Billy picked up Duke's forest appoggi, Duke picked up his bright skipping notes, so much like Art Tatum's runs, and both have raring piano tones and thoroughly crisp and cheerful improvisations. It is Billy, definitely, on the *Cosmo Williams Here's Popper*, *Tossed Poodle* and *Gave It Up*. He is on Johnny Hodges' *Tired South*, *Mean Yellow Man* and *Your Love Has Faded*. He speaks the response to *Katie's Myself*.

As the band moved along, after the 1929 European trip, playing the Boston Elm, the Chicago Sherman, California, it moved west and more into Stephenson's groove. In the early years of his

association with Ellington, he was influenced by Duke that was primary. Later on, the influence became mutual, and Ellington and his band moved into these third and more formidable musical phases, that of carefully planned scores, a phase that led inevitably to Carnegie Hall in 1929, to works of the magnitude of *Black, Brown and Beige*, of *New World of Color* and the *Perseus Suite*.

Billy did almost all of the band's pop tunes, the first records with singer Herb Jeffery, who joined the band in 1929, and the last with Ivan Anderson in 1932. He collaborated on arrangements with Duke, and then, in 1930 and 1931, he began to substitute his brilliant original compositions to the Ellington theory.

First there was Duke the "A" Train, and the best known of his original instruments for the band. He had long been interested in telling something about Fletcher Henderson first, the kind of thing which had loused the new-born band for Benny Goodman's large success. When men would carry the music there, there is no more would penetrate the sex figure, it would go in a median-line tempo. Because he completed the rough outline of the score riding on the Eighth Avenue express which goes straight from 12th Street, to midtown Manhattan, to uptown to Harlem. Billy named it after that train, "the A Train." It was one of the most successful jazz instruments of that or any other time. As bands had earlier played *Christopher Columbus* and later did *Jerry Brown*, in 1931 they all performed Billy Stephenson's *Duke the "A" Train*, playing its blithe figure very slowly (Glenn Miller) or pretty fast (Gale Galloway) but giving that music.

Chorus Bridge followed, a sensitive mood piece, its harmonies more than likely reminiscent of *Ravel*. As a matter of fact, its main figure is a passing phrase in one of the French composer's *Fallen Mists of Remembrance*. What it was played for Billy, however, about a year after he wrote *Chorus Bridge*, he'd never heard the French composer's name write. Like Duke, like Will Votary, like most of the short young composers and arrangers of our time, Stephenson has found an association with

in Burrell's direction. He has surpassed the harmonious style of the French impressionists, combining the chromatic richness of their rooms with the chord and key changes of the blues, the abstract structure of jazz and the colors and textures and delicate nuances upon pitch which characterize the music of Ellington.

Another pitch, much like the *Bridge*, is *Painted Flower*, in which the impromptu tones and turns of pitch are performed by Johnny Hodges with surprising efficiency. The *Bridge* was inspired by a Whistler painting, though the English reviewer assumed that Billy had somehow dreamed a walk across London's Chelsea Bridge and had communicated his visionary experience, with "swimming fidelity," day and, "to the atmosphere and mood of the bridge itself and its surroundings." *Painted Flower* is a kind of summing up of Ellington's aesthetic, of the atmosphere and mood of his "vision." It earned him still another nickname. By one of his close friends, Billy is called P. F.

The Ellington vision reflects no physical boundaries. It may be a stretch of ten blocks in Harlem on Lenox Avenue in Edgewater or Seventh. It may be a segment of South Parkway in Chicago. Central Avenue in Los Angeles or Greenwich Village in New York. It may be a bar in any part of town in any town on the United States. It may be a private home, a park, a barber shop or a hot dog stand. Wherever Billy is, wherever there are some people he knows, and in his six years with Duke he has come to know some people almost wherever there are people, there he sets up his salon.

Talk at the salon wanders from music, by way of clothing, drinks and drinking, a new novel, a new word, a French idiom, a new friend, a moment of metaphysics, to music.

"Think about Tatum," Billy will say, "even a nothing becomes a something. Says the *Argonne*, now you don't [do that]," he will solemnly affirm, "but you got taken a few on this [a typical Ellington pronunciation] and it'll make some sense at last. Good changes, everything." And he will wave his hands in the air over his head, as if he were conducting symphonic conversation instead of soul.

"Tatum was as wonderful the other night," Aaron Brinkers will amplify. Aaron is Billy's roommate, a race professional but a talented painter whose long bony spindly long fingers to make the stretch of a throat-cut to say for him as an excuse for the rest of us. Aaron is a close friend of Art Tatum's, close enough so he can give admission to the barbers of music which follow Art's completion of the job, at least at a morning. These barbers are the great proving grounds for the new ideas of Tatum, generally regarded as the most brilliant of jazz pianists and one of the most accomplished technicians on the instrument in or out of jazz. "Tatum was wonderful," Aaron will continue. "To hear him play made. Like Pete or James P. Only faster."

"Fastest thing I ever met," Billy comments, "fastest . . ." He can't continue, thinking of the fastest thing he ever saw, he begins to laugh, a soft little laugh that finally gathers enough power to say Ellington speaks clearly.

"Well," Aaron asks.

"Well," Bernard asks. Bernard is another of Billy's close friends, a gentle man, just about between Billy's shyness and Aaron's witless, "Well."

But Billy is not for gone. "Never mind," he says, "you probably wouldn't think in our funny company." He takes off his glasses, wipes them, and thinks of the fastest thing he ever saw again. He starts laughing, even more uproariously than before. He almost drops his glasses, but his master bids Aaron and Bernard join him. Billy never tells them what is so damned funny.

"I wish I could express myself," Billy confesses. "I can't tell you because I can't describe it."

"You express yourself," Bernard comforts.

"Not like *Reminisce*," Billy says willy. "Did you read *Arnold and Department*?" He asks Bernard.

"Yes."

"You read?" Billy means. "Psychological notes of our time. Very much to the point, I was impressed." He turns to Bernard's tin. "I'm impressed by your tin, too," he says. "What a lovely color. What is it, a kind of blue, huh?"

"Amen," Aaron blurts, "amen as I'm able."

"Oh, my God!" Billy exclaims.

"Let's go," Bernard commands.

"Enough said," Aaron admits. "I'll go quietly."

"Quiet didn't," Billy describes Aaron. "I let you a live, an *schubert's*," Billy states. "Quick," he says. "I've been waiting to see that damn *Steen*," he mutters with self-satisfaction.

"Are you all just?" Aaron asks.

"I told you we couldn't go," Bernard says.

"*Je suis de votre avis*," Billy agrees. Trained in the methods of French conversation and devoted to the language, he has the seemingly inevitable liking of Americans who've learned their French in the schools: he addresses all his remarks, even in his moments, in the second person plural. The distinction between *tu* and *vous*, *tu* and *vous*, has somehow eluded him. But the *Steen* have not. When he is feeling blue, he says that he is among black pines, beyond the sea.

Billy, Aaron and Bernard will go downtown to eat a snack at the Café au Breuchon, maybe. Perhaps they will wander over to a party at a friend's house in the Village, or pay a long call to the bar at Café Society Downtown. The Downtown Café is likely to get them on a Monday, when there isn't much else open. Then they will stand at the bar. Billy just barely reaching above it, and up *Steen*, those touchless run and broadly combinations. Two *Steen*s are guaranteed to combine the upper and spring his muscular appetit. But Billy has stood up at the bar as equivalent of transference and he'll be damned if he'll be satisfied, and he isn't.

There are times, of course, when the intense drinking schedule and concomitant life eating sets up with discipline. About three of a morning of a long and sedulous party Billy has been known to fall suddenly asleep, slung in a chair which finally sways him, in any upholstered chair does, clutching his glass. Billy can sleep anywhere from a half hour to four on this position, clanking the glass, never dipping it, no matter how full it is. Billy never gets bigger out of a glass of his

valuable. He's just as proud of that accomplishment as he is of his ability to hold a cigarette between his fingers until it is within a quarter-inch of extinction. He holds the cigarette up to the ash down a drop and at the same time doesn't burn him.

Of his drinking and cigarette-balancing, of his sedulous proficiency and perfectionism, Billy is proud. Of his debt magnanimity of conversational conversation to that, as in his holding of the burning cigarette, he isn't bowed just neither in his appearance, he is proud. Of his close association with Duke and the Elkhorn mountains, Billy is proud, but he is truly concerned with his personal medical accomplishments. He is much more concerned with the self-satisfaction which he experienced a few years ago and which he takes up and goes down with state and nerve which make even him, and he isn't much startled by irregularities of any kind. But suddenly a look or a piece of meat or a new air girl in him and he must possess it. One of the benefits of this liberal education, so very different in its boundaries from the St. John's Hundred Great Books, is very liberal, one of its strongest benefits has been the liberalization of his friendship with Leon Horne.

Leon met Billy right after jump for Jay, Duke's second, finished as was on the Coast in 1941. Billy was no longer Woody or Billy, though he was occasionally called *Steen*. He was addressed by almost everybody as "Sweet Fox." Toby Harbeck had given him the name. Walking down the side of a team on the way to a one-nighter, Toby grabbed Billy.

"You're now name is Sweet Fox," Toby said. A new name from Toby was pretty rare to stick. He'd named Joe Newman Tricky Sam, and Ray Kildridge had become Little Joe under his spell. Billy was ready to accept the new name, but he wanted to know why.

"Why?"

"Because you look like him."

"What?"

"Sweet Fox."

"What?"

imagine anything more wonderful than receiving this word from the gracious hands of the most beautiful of my dear, lovable people." Lena bowed down and bowed him and back she and he bowed down, she cried and he began to announce the next number, which was one of his most beautiful originals, *Mating*. The milking of horses to the show house at unusual past times, in which a few farmers skipped lightly along from complete horse stables to simple auction markets for slave sales, one that is named with remarkable accuracy, since its principal theme was beyond affairs, just those of full length. But the farmers didn't know that it was named with remarkable accuracy because Scaphorn was too moved and Lena was too moved and the two they could offer was a line to each other and dead air to the country.

When, shortly after the *Eclipse* concert, Duke opened at Car's, the most star of Hollywood's hand stands, Billy was ready to be found at Car's.

"It's surely, surely glorious," Billy explained to Lena, "but I prefer your apartment."

Ellington was never chilled by the glances, too, and he would please Billy at Lena's and ask exactly what they were doing, and no matter what answer Billy or Lena would give, "talking," or "eating," or "drinking," or "drinking," Duke would reply, "Gee, that sounds awfully good! Wish I was there."

When Lena played the Crystal Theatre in New York, in the spring of 1935, Billy was about a picture of himself when the previous fall, in Toronto, Illinois, by himself, the photo was remarkably clear and remarkably true, the smile on his face was just the bright smile that friends of Scaphorn look for, the dreamy look in his eyes, behind the thick lenses of his glasses, the innocent dreamy look. Lena couldn't resist saying, "Hello, Sweet Pea," every time she came into her dressing room, and several times during the day, friends of Scaphorn who visited her there made further advances and advances to the little man on the make-up table. Telling the story of her importance at an army camp in the South, Lena made several ad-

resses to the picture. "He would have been mad at that, even before Sweet Pea," she said. Or, "Even Sweet Pea would have been mad."

Lena had been out for a three-day engagement at Camp Robinson, Arkansas, but the next after the first day when camp officials allowed that pleasure of war to attend her performance at the post theater, because they were white, but included the Negro soldiers from the audience. After indignation protest, she finally got permission to give a show for the Niggers in a main hall and then she left the camp. When she went to New York a few months later, she was interviewed by Shirley Elder, who conducts a radio column. Asked about the Camp Robinson incident, Lena spoke straightforwardly about it. In all the time the program drew that week, only one letter praised Lena's frank comments. It was from a sister who said he knew what he was fighting for and it was for her. "Go back to Africa," he told Shirley Elder, "and take Lena Horne with you." Lena told the broadcaster how to answer him.

"Tell him," Lena smiled, "that the Africans wouldn't take much like me. I'm too mixed up with others." Which was precisely the sort of answer Billy would have made to that sort of suggestion and Lena was delighted that she had made an answer he might have made.

"I've grown up, knowing him," she says. "Certain people make you happy. That's Sweet Pea. I suppose I was supposed to know somebody like him, I'm very happy with him. You know," Lena explains, carefully, "most others don't know what I'm like at all." She pauses a moment. "You know how it is. Most people who know Sweet Pea get that feeling for him."

Most people do and that and will get that feeling for him. When Jimmy Blanton joined the band at the Commodore Hotel in St. Louis in December, 1935, Scaphorn was about his first warm contact. Blanton was a twenty-one-year-old bass player from St. Louis, a replacement for Billy Taylor. Blanton was an eager young man, anxious to please, worried about making good with the greatest of all bands. Billy helped him over some of the first headaches, the rough moments inevitable in any

man's first days with a social walk as tight as a dance band. And Elington made good.

Jimmy Blanton, in his three years with the Elington band, revolutionized the art of bass playing for the art of jazz. He took the bass out of the diaphanous in which it had been professionally enshrouded in jazz, for which it had been named among purists ("diaphanous" is the same language used to call their instruments in the twenties and thirties). The bass was, before Blanton, a rhythm instrument, flunked, for the most part, in playing four notes, the four notes of the measure, or just as many beats in the measure contained, eight, if the four quarters were broken up into eighth notes, but rarely more, even if the tripping or ruck was playing triplets, maybe runs to a bar, or running semibreves, notes to a measure. It played the basic rhythm, one, TWO, three, FOUR, or ONE, two, THREE, four. Or, one, two, one, two, the steady accompaniment of Dixieland jazz. Blanton changed all that. He made the bass a legitimate solo instrument. He played as much on the bass as could be played on a sophisticated melody instrument, emphasizing the tricky syncopations typical of the jazz of the thirties, put the triplets and sixteenths which had been proscribed for the bass in previous years. Blanton's diaphanous bass playing was picked up by almost every bass player of any technique or taste or creativity in the business. Duke was so taken with him that he made three records accompanying Blanton's band, *Fluctuating Again* and the *Blues on Columbia*, *Patser Patscher Patser*, *Impassioned Lady*, *Bobby was Good* and *Mr. J. B. Morton Wasn't*. All out of print, now, these are prime collector's pieces.

Jimmy Blanton was a weak boy, physically, a victim of congenital tuberculosis. But he wasn't seriously aware of his fragile lungs until overcome by the rocking pain of coughing fits in California in the spring of 1930. He went off on a vacation at Marineweir near Los Angeles, high enough up in the hills to guarantee fresh air but his dead, convulsed lungs. But it was too late, and, as everybody in the band knew well enough, though they had hoped and prayed it was Mr.'s happen, Jimmy Blanton succumbed. The greatest bass player jazz had ever known, one

of his place, died at twenty-four. His death affected Billy strongly, Ben Webster even more. Ben, one of the revered minor saxophonists today, after his years with Elington, joined Duke just before Blanton died. When Jimmy died, Ben cried so bitterly on the stand as the *Blues* *Strollers* in Chicago, then he had to leave for the evening. Scorchers went out with him.

"Don't let it hit you so hard, Uncle Beney," Billy suggested. "He was just one great, that's all."

"That's right," Ben said. "But that's not right."

"I know a isn't right," Billy admitted. "But that's the world. Not only do the good die young, but they're tortured while they're alive. Anyway, Beney, we'll live so to be very, very old."

Ben wept as Billy, his first smile in a long time. Ben then smiled and his subsequent tears so work did not mean the ugly feeling Blanton's death left him with. It added to an ingrained cynicism one of the most formidable philosophies of cynical art in the music business. It added, too, to Billy's premonitions of inevitable evil, but he lessened his bitterness, his conviction of a fundamental tragedy in the world, with a notion which made the name of *Beney* fit as hard as rock as salt.

Billy's philosophy is a simple doctrine, comprehension of his sense of evil and of his artistic loneliness. Music should give pleasure, he believes. He knows no artistic experience pleasurable and unpleasurable and arranges it according to give pleasure. He doesn't quite accept Duke's doctrine about coming to the whites and blacks of a sadness, which may actually be expected to have both come. "If it's salt, they want," Duke says, "it'll be heavy cream." Billy gives them what he wants, sometimes with milk, sometimes with heavy cream, and Duke corroborates official Elington doctrine in a headlong rush to welcome whatever benevolence Scorchers has provided.

"If Scorchers likes it," Duke says, naming his final arbiter, "then it's all right." Billy sits in the control room at all Elington record sessions to give final okay or more music down. Duke respects his tone above all others and tries to fit accordingly. It is a good tone to live by, it is catholic, and though shaped by the pleasure principle, it doesn't adhere very and and sounds.

it doesn't read the downright ugly. Billy likes Beethoven and Bachmanian, you see his kids from the piano Capriccio and the four piano exercises of Scrien. He likes Ravel and Mahanal and Debussit. He likes Billie Holiday and Mildred Bailey, singers who give more even reflection and those who bend and take them with absolute simplicity. In the various of his personal tastes he is much like Duke, who, asked whom he prefers—Debuss or Stridien or Ravel or Debussy or Stravinsky—answers in variety, "I like music."

To Billy's influence may be ascribed Duke's switch from catch-me-catch-me composing to disciplined preparation of manuscripts. There are legends going about Duke's mode of composition, about the number of pieces he has composed on his short sleeves, on scrap of paper, leaning to a rehearsal or record session as a taxi, waiting outside a record studio. Some of these are more than certainly true; some when Duke did much of his composing in this hither-thither way. And even today he will catch inspiration from the speed of a roadway through a city's park or the sound of a train's wheels as they clatter along the steel tracks. But the bulk of his work, as all musicians' it have done at home in the privacy of his own room, or at a hotel, if he is quartered out of town for any length of time. It is or guided composition, as carefully put together as the movements of a symphony or the arcs of an opera in the classical tradition. There may be less minute changes in a record session. Duke will not relinquish the spontaneity of improvised ideas or the wealth of ideas of his students. The basic pattern of Ellington composing today, however, is well-ordered, musical certainty, knowledge of what is being done, what can be done in music. Billy Stridien can be credited the bringing much of this certainty into Ellington's life.

Duke scrapped Billy's-recommend musical jazz, but he with the student jazz, though he had rejected Kansas Korman and any serious musicians in traditional music for himself. The emphasis is very mild it is important. He was still very of broad discipline, still worried about being the spontaneous character of his music, if he yielded to these influences he still is. But in

Billy he found a wonderful balance of the traditional and the contemporary needs against it, a background in the classics and a solid participation in the world of jazz. He found a mentorship and a personality admirably suited, one which could borrow materials from Ravel, perhaps consciously, perhaps not, and produce a *Clarinet Rhapsody* and a *Flower Flower* and dozens of strings for pop tunes with the same superb atmosphere. He found an old who wrote freely music, in chamber, like *After All* and *Day Dream* and *Manner in Blue*, and jump out, like "If" *Travis* and *Chlorine*, *Home* and *Johnny Come Lately* and *Milky*, which turned out to be just as much as chamber. He found a co-worker, with whom he could turn out large groups of music, such as the *Perfecto Suite*, "which is not intended to describe the various moods of the instrumental performers but rather to delineate the character a woman takes on under the influence of." It is in four parts. *Sonata*, most curiously named but not impressive as a description of what Duke calls the "intensity of under-the-lining type of love." This is Stridien's. Billy and Duke collaborated on *Orange Feeling*, which describes "violent love." *Demons in Love* is Duke's dance and blues he alone in the playing: it's for piano and rhythm section, with the rest of the band tapping out the beat with their feet, playing "his foot." The section is about "crazy love." Duke admits it is a rhapsody for legions. The Suite shares with *Chlorine*, "a sophistication in love, representation of the person who looks over and above everything just indignantly good." This is Duke's—he gets the required sound from the trumpet of William "Cat" Anderson, the new man on his band who can actually play "over and above everything," up to a G above C above high C with absolute ease and to a B flat above that with a little more difficulty.

Billy unfortunately has dropped work on his own large-scale compositions as he has inspired Duke to finish his or collaborated with him. Duke did *Black, Brown and Beige* and *New World A Corner* and *Shadows*, wrote continuously an material for musical comedies and films and revues now. But Billy has offered the strings and scraps of musical ideas and develop

ment which he has gathered toward the shaping of a piano concerto to gather dust in his mental room or an apartment at 544 Edgewater Avenue. His routine is well established and he rubs out all night and often through the early morning, drinks, talks, sometimes eats—after a brief sleep he will get up to work or to play piano battles with Aaron or to come down to an Ellington rehearsal or record session. He doesn't have time to review the rehearsing, the sleeping and his usual assignments for Duke, to get much other work done. He can be quite late in turning in those assignments, and he usually is, following a pattern set by Duke himself. Duke will forgive him anything, but, after all, when he feels the strength of God within him and the stress of duties remaining without, he writes such long notices made as you over to Duke's apartment, as late in the morning to talk about it. And he is still the remarkable little man who, after an evening's "mulling" around the town of Buffalo, coming home, drinking alone, got "just loaded enough" so he won't quite sure what had happened to his drinking companion, gathered her and got and found where the head was playing the walked, slowly, with all the dignity he could muster, up to the stage, carefully placed his coat on the back of the chair, his hat on the back of his head and went to sleep, right on the stage. Through better than an hour and a half Scrymgeour slept on the stage in full view of the audience, but neither Duke nor any of the musicians would disturb him.

Once, recently, Duke and Paarsow, as Ellington calls him, shared a moment together, Scrymgeour taking the upper berth, Duke the lower. Several hours after they had retired Scrymgeour's pillow fell down.

Duke inclined his head outside his berth and looked up at Scrymgeour. "What was that?" he asked Billy.

"That was my pillow," Billy said.

"Oh," Duke said, "I thought it was a cloud."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

JUMP FOR JOY

"I'VE GOT THE GILL," DUKIE SAID. "WELL, DON'T YOU FEEL THE GILL?"

This was in the early summer of 1941. Duke and the movie writers who formed the American Screen Theaters were talking over possible stars and featured players for a new type of review. It was to review the star quality of the movie writers. It was to answer for the serious mistakes and gross errors of omission and commission, in the treatment of Negroes in the American theater. It was to feature the Ellington band and each talent as Duke thought fitted with it. But the advice of these movie writers had to be listened to. They were pulling up much of the money. They were writing the stars and the lyrics. They were bright men.

"Who is that?" one of the arbitrary counsel asked.

"Lena Horne," Duke answered.

"Good girl," somebody confirmed.

"She'll cost too much," somebody denied. Lena wasn't a big name then, but she was enough of a singer on records and on spots in New York and Hollywood as she could command a big salary.

"No go," somebody else added. Lena was not. Nevertheless, a good start of one meaning was offered. There were some very pretty girls in the cast finally arrived at, namely Dorothy Dandridge, who is giving a good career as a movie actress under way. There were good comedians and good dancers and good singers and the Ellington musicians and soloists. During the show's run, it impressed the "top" confirmed Duke's conception of the ability of home Negro theater and got a number of excellent

others under way. And it was the vehicle for the first three since Duke ever wrote.

When George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* was produced by the Theatre Guild in 1935, Duke was asked to comment on the first American opera by the *New Theater*, a leftist monthly. Duke ran out of all kinds to comment.

"Good music and a swell play, I guess, but the two don't go together," he said. "I mean that the music did not mesh with the mood and spirit of the story. Maybe I'm wrong or perhaps there is something wrong with me, but I have noted this on other things lately too . . . I am not enjoying our *Porgy and Bess*."

Duke found a hell of a paradoxism. It is about Negroes but "it does not use the Negro musical idiom. It was not the music of Caribbean *Bess* or any other kind of Negroes." The music was grand, Duke said, because it was in the spirit of the "grand" composers and the composers of grand opera, not music in their spirit, as a matter of fact. "Gershwin didn't discriminate. . . . In [his music] was taken from some of the best and a few of the worst. . . . He borrowed from everyone from Liza to Duke. 'Walla' knows him." Ellington demonstrated the way Gershwin borrowed, showing the derivation of some passages from *Allegro in Blue* in *Where Did My Love Go?* *Peter Gunz*, a Negro blues. His own music, Duke explained, was truly "in the Negro idiom." And he played what he called a "guthrie-like" style, well a while, still Negro. "I have not stolen or borrowed."

He objected strongly to much of the music in *Porgy and Bess* which did not characterize the scenes it set. "The music," he said, "had to make their own characteristics. . . . There was a crap game such as no one has ever seen or heard. It might have been opera, but it wasn't a crap game. The music went one way not the action another. . . . Tell the audience gophers 'Don't let people get right into their parlor' and 'Aren't they emotional?'"

In any honest Negro musical play, Duke said, there would have to be social criticism. Talking of a projected movie show on which he was working, Duke gave an example of what he

wrote: "I have an episode which concerns the death of a baby . . . I put into the days of the misery, sorrow and unhappiness of the conditions that went with the baby's death. It was true to-and of the life of the people it depicted. The same thing can be said for *Porgy and Bess*."

The *New Theater* interviewer, Edward Morrice, summed up well for Ellington as well as himself. "No Negro could possibly be fooled by *Porgy and Bess* . . . The production is cooked up, farmed out and wheeled to the pitiful old 'backstage' of the Charleston Gullah Negroes—who are, one supposes, 'old times'! For the times are here to debunk such trips to Gershwin's hampered Negroes, and the metropolitan trash of the script of *Porgy*. . . . There will be more generalized go-go-ing, financial success, and more understanding of various socio-economic conditions. . . . There will be fewer wicked, lip-smacking 'yellow-pit huffer' stereotypes. . . . The music will expose terror and defiance in colored Negro musical forms which have remained melodious despite a life of indignity. They will compose and write these things because they feel the consequences of an existence which is a wild combination of brutality and beauty."

Morrice was optimistic perhaps. A few years later along came *Minkah's Daughters* and *Cabin on the Bay* (songs and music reversed), which once again bowed headstrong heads. Bill Robinson continued to play the arch Uncle Tom character. Billy Rose produced a mildly antiquated version of *Bess's* Carvers, with the modern manuscripts of the Spanish liquor-painting, horizontal music band, naturally, of course, among Negroes. He used also the usual exaggerated "dee, dee, dee, dee goin'" rhythm, and had them last line spoken by the colored equivalent of Don José (Joe)—that universal sensation, "Being so high to a tree," an incredible line to hear a Negro speak, with his people's tragic history of lynching.

Duke has the persistent answer to these stereotypes and assumptions of Negroes. It is as well a debt party of the threats of wannabe anthropologists who refer to all Africans of darker color as negroes. He is a musical comedy called, unobtrusively, *Afro-*

Conditioned jungle. The opening scene was mood and chase and theme. In a particularly chic living-room, decorated to the last of urbane good taste, but not given to floridly-outfurnishedness, sit the King and Queen at one of the ancient African tables. That's dressed in a gown by Schiaparelli. In is a shockily lived dinner jacket. They are drinking their after-dinner brandy and rather as relaxed converse the house is already closed. A muffled bell rings. The King picks up the telephone.

"Yes," he says. "yes, yes. Mamma-bone. Oh, husband. Well, it there's nothing we can do about it." He closes the receiver down on its cradle and turns unhappily to his consort.

"What is it, darling?" she asks.

"There's another of those expatriates coming over from America. Trying to change the original sources of their jazz, you know?"

"Oh, dear," the Queen coos.

"But, my dear," the King says, "we shall have to get out our big-drum again."

The story goes on from there to inquire, not too politely, but without inflammatory words either, into the customs and mores of Negro culture in Africa and America, those which are true and those which are false, the whole structure of myth and legend about the colored people. It isn't too likely that this more inquiry will ever reach Broadway or Hollywood production. Its audience will not be understood, its message will probably not be appreciated.

Much of *Jump for Joy* was about people's heads, too. But there was so much warmth and humor and unswayed enjoyment in that verse that most people who came to see it couldn't help loving it. Alvin Davis, Editor of the Los Angeles Tribune, one of the most exciting and most able of Negro periodicals, caught its mood and named its character. "*Jump for Joy*," he said, "prety and so unaware of its real chance as an advertisement, is time and earnings for a new mood in the theatre, reflecting truly the happy state of colored life. In *Jump for Joy* Uncle Tins is dead, God yes, but honest."

The title song of the musical announced its point of view

with great good intention. Paul Weisner, who wrote the lyrics for most of the songs, did very well by Duke's social philosophy in these words:

Face them well, land of cotton,
Cotton tale is out of apple, honey dish,
Jump for joy.

Don't you groan, look here,
All the hands, I do believe
Have been killed, ain't you killed,
Jump for joy.

Have you seen potatoes, potato?
Oh, there's potatoes was just a vegetable move.

It goes on from there to its last eight measures, more typical show-biz stuff about stepping up to Face when you step up to Heaven and giving Face some skin. To "give skin" is pretty basic social exchange among musicians, especially colored musicians today. Instead of shaking hands, you put on slip palms. There are many "skin" variations: some involve trucking back fingers, some thumb-and-pinky, some go from clasp to clasp to little finger to thumb to palm. Generally you take the skin you've been given and deposit it, in an elaborately formal pass-around gesture, in a pocket. Truly Sam, has a lovely way of giving skin, preferably to a pretty girl. He takes her hand, rolls the skin together into wrist and fingers, as if he were puffing tobacco to fill a home-made cigarette; then he places her fingers slowly over the skin gathered so carefully in the corner of her palm, takes the fat which results and kisses it with surprising elegance.

Jump for Joy was "hip." People *put* skin. They were, upon occasion, dressed in "new" suits. As a matter of fact, the last extensive treatment of the "new suit with a draped drape and a rust pleat" was in that verse. But, Fox and Sklar, whom Alvin Davis called "the actually transsexual," danced dead-on through a tailor-shop scene in which the custom suit ever was draped about one of their shapes. The language, the costumes, the dancing, the singing in *Jump for Joy* were the real

thing, spoke with a husky, soft smile so understanding, ladies standing wide-eyed, enraptured grace across the stage of the Los Angeles Music Theatre.

The chorines and girls followed the lines of the title song lyric: "Cotton hole was out of sight." "Green Pastures was just a watermelon move!" The first half opened with an explanation of the plan and position of *The Sun-Tanned Frolics of the Nation*. It closed with a little scenario called *Snake Feet's Saloon Is a Diner Is Now*. The second act opened New Haven as his *Concrete for Alabaster*, one of his several engaging scenes that vary in which wrong room, burning water, noise just a hair's breadth sharp as the, are passed thoroughly across the velvet and through the bell of his capacious barn. And then Joe Turner, the great blues singer, turned up dressed as a policeman in a tin called *Let's Hit on the Road*. Joe came on every night about 9:30, and he then turned up every night about that time. They turned to him about the blues for fifteen minutes and then left. Joe himself left, went to a nearby precinct and played his own records on the jukebox, singing down with his recorded voice.

Mary Boyan and Paul White entered through *Slitlip*, a bright Ellington perspective, and Marie came back to do her parody of Katherine Hepburn. Marie and Paul and an exotic dancer named "Garbo" kept cost on a high level. "Garbo," whose body, Althea Davis said, "was like snowberry moccasins," incorporated Ellingtons like it tries to be interpreted. Marie sang her hope nostalgically in a *Cherokee Shaker* to one of Duke's earliest tunes. The show used Ellington's "I" from *and Duke's Five that Is Red and That Ain't Good*, perhaps the most involving of Ellington's society ballads. Joe's singing of an incredibly exotic stopped the show and sold hundreds of thousands of records. In contrast, the "baked" one slightly was even plain. *Amie in My Bed*, which was also a record success. Bobbie Johnson sang several of Duke's songs, none better than he did. *The Brownies Got in the Cotton Dance* and she took home Bobbie's tall, like figure, dressed in all-colored Western dress, straddled a stage with some sophistication, and her soft voice,

moderately disciplined by Duke, made more than ordinary sense of Paul White's lyrics. Horatio Gaudinbridge was kindly to look at, and Wonderful Smith and Willie Lewis and Edith Johnson were very happy to learn so. The show was jammed with spectators: the band's relatives, Rex and Johnny and Ben Webster and Ray Nance, another musician, Lawrence and Trudy and Henry and Carter, got some opportunities to display their expensive talents. the working was brief and its delivery very amusing.

Each night, for twelve weeks, as soon as the curtain was down, the audience which ran the show went to discuss that night's performance. The musical was always in fact.

"There were, now, then the point of that first act certain gas scene? somebody, one of the writers, perhaps Ed Keller or Paul Webster or Hal Burke or somebody, would ask Duke 'People want to know we're 'Tommorrow' will they?'

"No, no, baby," Duke would answer them, individually. "It isn't 'Tommorrow' stuff." They were worried about the white-haired Duke and his millions of followers more than anything else. In this show he was to be killed dead.

Jump for Joy lasted less than three months. It didn't go anywhere like *Slitlip*, just dropped itself out in a little box of the stage show and that is theater in Boston, Chicago, and so on. But it left enough of an impression so that most of those who saw it and are concerned with a serious and honest Negro theater constantly refer to it as the Negro musical. It was probably the only employment of colored singers and dancers and comedians which really didn't lapse into crude caricature of the Negro at some point, which didn't pander to the white man's distorted idea of colored singing and dancing and comedy. It was ahead of its time and presented on the wrong coast of America for theatrical success, but it made its vigorous point.

Duke's plans for opera and operetta and musical comedy and revue have never crystallized, since the demise of *Jump for Joy*. He's always working on three or four or half a dozen at once. One was an idea based on modernizing *Amie's Father's* for jump

time. Another was the *It's Conditional Jangle*, which ended up as a title for a piece written for character Jimmy Hamilton. But Duke has not exactly relinquished the hope of doing this jangle score. He wants to do it later for Lena, because "she's got a soul." And he's talked with Paul Robeson about one. He's got a complex rhythmic pattern worked out for a dance-drama, which may end up as a ballet or a score to a musical, evoking the polyrhythms of African drumming, made out as one against that set in three against four to the bass and motions to follow the notes and rests of the horn players each other. Once, in the same show Duke made as many plans for large-scale expression and did not carry them out, even as part, it would have been possible to discuss these ideas as varied interpretations, which would always remain in the nebulous phase of improvisation pieces. But Duke has *Jump for Joy* behind him, "groovy and consistent of the real theme" as it was, which demanded and received from him a brilliant score and ingenious casting and handling of cast and music. He wrote and helped to direct a musical which not only sent off the devils from the Negro entertainment world. With that achieved, it is certain that other shows will follow. They will follow in *Black, Brown and Beige* followed *Jump for Joy* a year and a few months later.

Jump for Joy, though it opens its narrative, told a story, the story of Negroes in the entertainment world, what they looked like and how they acted and danced and sang and made fun. Unlike *Porgy and Bess*, its music did "bunch with the mood and spirit of the story." "It was true to and all the life of the people it depicted." There was no banalities lampooning of Negroes, as in the country-club scene in *Green Green*. Here was a happy show which still had dignity. Duke had done what he'd always wanted to do. With that accomplished, the career and the rich articulation of ideas which followed were inevitable. Since the trip to Europe in 1935, everything, work and play, thinking and acting and composing and performing, seemed to fit into a pattern of achievement. *Black, Brown and Beige* was the proper next step, as Duke confessed his talented university in popular music.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

BLACK, BROWN AND BEIGE

WHEN THE DAYS CAME BACK LAST IN THE WINTER OF 1936, there were great cheers from its supporters up and down the Atlantic Coast. Duke had stayed in Oklahoma, with just short excursions away for almost two years. Louman in the East had heard the band on the air, had spun his records on their turntables, but had not heard the Ellington musicians in person. The personnel of the band had changed greatly. Everybody was interested. Loyal supporters of the band were anxious.

The first big change in the band had taken place in Omaha, 1935. Cootie Williams left Duke to join Benny Goodman's band. Benny offered him more money than Duke could pay him, to play in his band and to take spotlighted solos before the band. The figure was good, the musician seemed good. Cootie told Duke were the predictions of the Ellington's band's future. Duke was finished. If not finished, he was on his way out. Nobody could replace Cootie. That distinctive gravel sound, that considerable open trumpet tone could not be elicited from any other horn. Raymond Scott composed a days to accompany the not shaking of heads. When Cootie left the Duke, which was one of his band's most successful just immeasurable. But Cootie was replaced and the replacement, trained about in the same press as just "temporary," turned out to be happily permanent. The man who replaced Cootie became one of Duke's greatest stars, one of the most versatile performers ever in his jam.

Duke brought Storyham to meet Ray Hance at Joe's De Luxe, a South Side spot in Chicago, where he was featured as trumpet, violinist, singer and dancer. Duke was impressed with him, amazed at his freedom and versatility, and Ray was loved. Ray was a Chicago boy, born in 1915, brought up on the South Side. He was taught violin by a friend of his mother's, a photographer and musician named Charlotte Page. After eight years with her, he worked under her teacher, Miss Fisher, at the Chicago Musical College for another four. And during his years of study, he suggested his education along professional musical lines with pipe and more longer engagements dressing small and large jump bands. He played opposite Hot "King" Cole's band on hundreds of dates, then got jobs with Earl Hines and Horace Henderson, and, as a single, at the jazz and other clubs in Chicago.

From the first number Hance played with Duke, his ebullient, infectious personality was clear. When he jumped up to play a solo, only three quickie notes his short little figure appeared behind the broad shoulders of the accompanist who sat in front. Like Freddy Jackson before him, Ray was a "Pony," a natural showman. When he came down to sing from his violin table solo, he landed an imaginary opponent with his violin bow. He danced brightly, short nervous steps shimmering with great quick and yields. He sang, as do most jumping trapeze acts, with a rhythmic zip in his voice. On the band's record of *At My Age*, from *Jump for Joy*, his laughing, slightly nervous singing was heard. On *Take the "A" Train*, his tramping, more tentative than anybody else's at the time (1941) could be apprehended. Singing, dancing, jolting through such very different pieces as *Blues, Mist and C* just blew, blowing bright horns on *Swing Suite* and "*G*" *Blues*, for Hance's small unit, Ray was as Duke had been brilliantly replaced; that glossy young had been reached.

Next big loss was Barney Bigard. He left in July, 1942, to join Freddy Slack, a white tenor, on the West Coast, later to form his own white band. Nobody could replace him. Chasney Hughson, a member of the Chick Webb band, took over his

chair for a year, playing the clarinet parts with legitimate distinction, but without distinction. Later, more successful substitutes were found, but Hance's particular brilliance on his instrument was his own thing. In the growth of Jimmy Hamilton as a clarinetist of music, another sort of musician is being developed in his place, but it is time beyond what Hance is aware.

By the time Duke got to New York, he was carrying four trumpets. Ray was the veteran, now playing cornet, producing the chorale, making Ray's brilliance as the more reliable, full note of the trumpet. Wallace Jones, who had stolen Whelan's place, was next along in length of service. Then came Ray Hance and Harold Baker. Baker was an added star, a touch of surprising brilliance. He had been a moneyer in the Andy Kirk band for some years before that he had played with Teddy Wilson's big band and, briefly, with Louis Armstrong. Harold was everybody's idea of how to play lead trumpet. His big singing voice carried a melody as nobody else could, and his conception, so important in shaping a jazz phrase, was rhythmic. There was more difference with about his own timing. Ellington, but one hearing of his chorale at *Harlem and Body and Soul*, knew of his purely performance of *Paper Doll* in the olden manner, was sufficient to ally that grotesque distortion.

The woodies had changed, too. Two Anderson had wanted to leave for some time. She wanted to get back to California and tend to her cooking. Two's Chasney Hance was a successful Los Angeles restaurant and Miss Anderson was anxious to improve the cooking and the dancing, the drying and the drying of the legs and wings and barrels which were her delectable operation. She gave her warning, and Duke replaced her over some months, an interesting process. First, Jopie Marshall, a successful young African individual came in, with Harry Ketch, to pick up some of Iva's tricks, her showmanship, her line understanding of song lyrics and her remarkable feeling for the way the band thought and felt and acted and played. But this tall girl with the bright eyes and the eager manner was still very young in the summer of 1942. She needed more dancing.

both formal education and hard experience. Jags went back to school after four months with Ellington, and Betty Kocher stayed.

Betty had sung with the Savoy Sisters and other black outfits. She diggied around, played all kinds of spins and was a trained blues singer with something of the manner of Bessie Hobbins. She knew some and carried measures along as evidenced groups much like the sophisticated Billie. In addition, she had her own specialties, an infectious *body and soul*, with her own added lyrics ("Take it all, Take it all, Take it all, body and soul") as rap songs, lots of blues. Duke wrote a seductive art of blues dances for her, *I Love My Lovin' Lovin'*, which Betty sold with delicious gesture and ready throat. It was all about taking her man to his wife's front door and his wife turning out to be as big as Joe Louis ("I can't guess do that no more"). Betty was still new when the band hit New York in the winter of 1935 and Ellington has crowded the bandstand at a one-nighter in the Royal Windsor Ballroom in uptown Manhattan to "dig" her and the other new additions to the band.

Jimmy Berman was new, too. He replaced Herbie Jeffries, who went back to the Coast to start his own club and make records for small companies, records which revealed all his melodramatic debauch, unfortunately, and none of the charm which he had displayed with Duke. The balancing musicianship of Ellington and his musicians was fully aimed on these sides, but even so there came of Herbie's sub-voice and tender feeling could be heard. He was easily the best ballad singer Duke ever had. Jimmy Berman was the pride of St. Louis, a boy in his early twenties who never quite "got with" Ellington's music. But he did sing an occasional song beautifully. Stringer's voice naturally for soft voices like his and in such arrangements as Billie's *Just As Thought You Were Here*, some and songs matched perfectly and not exquisite music. Jimmy was cut out of the flesh of Black, Brown and Beige at the dress rehearsal performance at High School the night before the Carnegie Hall concert, and he was a broken-hearted boy. The cut was inevitable, he had been assigned some grandly big swing

lyrics at the parlorish splurge with which B&B concluded. They had to go. But Jimmy didn't last long after that.

January 15 to 19, 1935, Ellington Week was proclaimed at the music business and among Negroes. It was the anniversary, roughly, of Duke's New York debut, twenty years earlier, and the week before his first Carnegie concert. All up and down New York, parties were decorating a coming event. It was to be a salute for Russian War Relief and the committee in charge of the affair had done a good job in getting word around that Duke was going to do a concert for three Musicians to whom Duke was an old man married. They came in large number to hear rehearsals for the concert at Radio Station, where all bands in New York rehearse, in the Halfway Hotel. That one building on Broadway between 52nd and 53rd Street. There was talk about a half five-minute work, something symphonic in conception and duration.

Rehearsals were directed almost entirely in this half-five-minute work, called Black, Brown and Beige. Duke stood before the band with the great score before him, rehearsing it piecemeal, section by section, sometimes in sequence, more often out of it. The bandleaders, who came from every part of the music business, "oldsters" (members of local), perhaps, young but music publishers, friends of those in the band, critics, were disappointed.

"Duke's sound like much," a critic commented.

"Awfully sloppy," another agreed.

Dan Robinson, who was listening with intense interest, turned to the disappointed musicians "You're so wrong," he said. After the concert they agreed that they had been wrong.

There were a lot of live performances at that first Ellington concert at Carnegie, on Saturday evening, January 19, Black, Brown and Beige was presented and followed by a distinguished number of Ellington compositions, but it was the long work that held primary interest.

The concert opened with Black and Ten Fantasy and Rockin' in Rhythm, Ellington alone. Then came two pieces of Sam Morris's, Moon Man and Juggler's Position, two of his first

ambitious effort: the first a beautiful example of Nance's skillful, she scored a strong success, with Benny's cheerful drumming its highlight. This formed the first section of the concert. The second comprised three of Duke's Portraits, some pictures of Ben Williams, "Scraggle" (James Earl Robinson, of course) and singer Florence Mills. The Florence Mills section was a scarcely veiled version of Duke's old *Black Beauty*, with Harold Baker carrying its heavy solo. Rex played polky notes through the first two Portraits, with suitable assistance from Tricky Sam in the introduction of the great Negro comedian and from Ben Webster in the details of the top dance. Missing from this group was Duke's charming Portrait of the Lion, pianist Willie Smith, which he had written several years earlier.

Black, Brown and Beige, which followed, was the centerpiece of the concert: it in turn was followed by the brief introduction, after which the listeners, eagerly discussing the notes and titles of *BBB*, were hastily summoned back into the hall in search and hear the presentation of a plaque in honor of Duke's twenty years as the music business. Mayor Peter Dennis Morgan made the presentation, stumbling unhelpfully through lines which were written for him. But his stumbling and the bustle and confusion of the whole ceremony were forgotten in the rush of emotion which the Ellington musicians, the Ellington friends and fans and Duke himself felt as the names of the thirty-two musicians on the plaque were read. These were the men who immortalized Duke Ellington, who rendered him gratitude and admiration and respect for his formidable musical achievement, men from both sides of the musical tracks, who were anxious to break down every last of racial snobbery, from the social to the academic. A laurel was laid onto the top of the plaque. Under it were the signatures.

"Leopold Godowsky," Dennis Morgan read. That was the first name. A man who had given jazz and Ellington great support, "Walter Damrosch," George Gershwin's first sponsor, "Edward Johnson," the Metropolitan Opera conductor. The other names followed, all well known to music, from every

branch of music: John Charles Thomas, William Grant Still, Dennis Taylor, Earl Hines, Marian Anderson, Paul Robeson, Lawrence Tibbett, Morgan Lawrence, Arrie Radtke (he had not then decided longer tempo was the name of juvenile delinquency), Roy Harris, George Gershwin, Albert Coates, Paul Robeson, Eugene O'Connell, Marian Gould, Earl Weill, Aaron Copland, Paul Whiteman, Benny Goodman, Jerome Kern, Cole Porter, Arrie Shaw, Miss Sawyer, Dean Dixon, Allen Wardwell, L. E. Johnson.

After a drum was the key was broken with the soaring sounds of *Bo-Bo*, an excerpt from the incomplete score for Duke's opera. *Bo-Bo*, which had also yielded much of the material for *BBB*. The names of both the opera and the excerpts are African, but the music is simply Ellington. Translators have writing, with brilliant scoring by piano and bass and Tricky Sam's glowing accompaniment, carries all before it.

Then it was Schoenberg's turn. *A Shyde, Westerns and Stamp* were announced, but only the first and last were played. The Stamp was the jump piece, *Johnny Come Lively*. The *Shyde* was something new, played in that concert and later dropped by the band. It is fit only for concerts, and sometimes, by its nature, as it is, Duke feels, for his concert. It is just only in its color. Its scoring, for nine woodwinds, two trumpets and more, out of tempo, implements as dry, and figures it really is a *Shyde*. The audience was occupied by what it heard, music that sounded more like Mahler and Inter-day Brahms than Ellington, with only a hint more here and there suggestion there in several times whose concert it was. But for all these difficulties, most musicians at the concert listened attentively and were deeply moved by Duke's number eleven for just instance.

Next, a flock of concertos featured various men on the band. Clarence Hamilton on clarinet did Harry Baggett's *Two Fiddlers* (which is a word-play in Shakespeare on "loosest stick"); Jack Todd was featured, along with Roy Harris, in his own Turkish delight, *Bo-Bo*, constantly near Eastern in her music and rhythms. Jack the Bear (Jack's nickname in Ellington

the couple well known as a description of a Harlem character) opened Junior Hogan on bass. Then *Blue Belles of Harlem*, which featured, as Duke said, "the puniest in the band." Johnny Hodges effected scenes with his virtuosic sailing of string-burns. Ray Brown, and Lawrence Brown played jump combinations, unusual for him in the forties when most of his compositions were of a looser sort. In flow of the *Blue Grass*, the first number on the program not written by Duke or one of the boys in the band. Ray Blaine Horn, Rex's half-sister's love story, concluded this section of the concert.

The concert itself was concluded with a trilogy: *Don't Get Around Much Any More*, then enjoying great popularity as a pop tune; *Green Up*, which appeared as an obscure version in Cuba in the 20s, but here gave blowing space to Tricky and Johnny and Lawrence and Ben Webster and others impassioned; leaving roomers in Ray Brown, and Mopid Judigs, which until quite recently was Ellington's favorite closing piece, a rock end in an evening which had moved some of the dynamics from *pp* to *ff*.

When the audience left the hall that night it was leaving with talk about the various scenes, about the works of Duke and Betty and Toot, but these scenes started the louder roar of approval or condemnation which greeted Ellington's long work, *Black, Brown and Beige*. One listening, some people felt, was not enough. Unfortunately, only a privileged few went over to hear the complete work again.

Duke introduced each of the three sections of *Black, Brown and Beige* verbally. He explained first of all that it was "a story parallel to the history of the American Negro." This was the story he had been talking about since the middle thirties. It had much in it of the opera he had been preparing for an even longer period. It was the story of his people.

Black, the first section, is the longest, leads around work songs and spirituals, driving deeply into the Negro past for its dramatic material, musical, social and literary. Betty Green's thumped version sets the opening scene of Negroes working on the railroad, in road gangs of all sorts, on the levees, in cotton

fields. Harry Carey's baritone singsongs introduce the secondary theme after the first has been stated impressively by the ensemble. Then comes Tricky Sam's growling of still another work song. Tooty leads the way into *Green Up*, the spiritual theme which is the second section of *Black, The Sabbath*, is portrayed by the various members of the orchestral community in spirited solo, Nance's Riffs, the value trombone, muted trumpet. Then the full glory of the spiritual theme appears as Johnny Hodges in his most mellifluous days opens the crying chorusing of Freddie Coy's guitar and the bass in running contrast. In a final recapitulation, the several themes of this section are retraced and Duke's opening words ended, the dominant motif of early Negro life not finished, either literally or in the music, but completely abandoned.

Brown, part two, chronicles the various wars of the past in which Negroes have participated and the great nineteenth-century influences among the colored people. There are the American Revolution, then the West Indian influence, in which musical representation is given to the Negroes in the United States of Negroes from the Bahamas and Puerto Rico and Jamaica and other islands in the Caribbean by Duke's piano and Tricky's trombone and two trumpets in vigorous plunger playing. Junior Ewer and Nance Doodle call the Confederates and the Union armies to Civil War, and Rex Brown joyously produces *Emancipation* with Tricky, after the older folks, whose lives have been agonized by the war, have had their momentary say in the voices of baritone and group songs to close. The Spanish American War ends the end of the century and introduces the assassination of the Negro in the twentieth century. One tone suggests the Blues, and the others are played and sung, an expression of the lives and experiences of the people colored Blues. An unannounced Blues is sung (at the concert) Betty Burke sang, from Maria Ellington took over) with obbligato by Tooty Hardwick in the early forties and a more solo between there and the end. The words and the music follow an intriguing pattern of building and break-down,

The Blues . . .
 The Blues ain't . . .
 The Blues ain't neither,
 The Blues ain't neither but a cold grey day
 And all night long it rains that way

"That's enough," then leaves you alone,
 "That's neither," I want to call my own,
 "That's enough," with voice enough to get up and go,
 "That's neither," like neither I know.

The Blues . . .
 The Blues ain't . . .
 The Blues don't know . . .
 The Blues don't know nobody as a friend,
 And I know neither where they're welcome back again,
 Low, ugly, mean Blues.

The whole band interjects, almost violently, when there is a minor symphonic solo of the kind of ready variety of which that instrument alone is capable. The band concludes the work's only orchestra, ending the Blues, and the singer comes back for the several bridge and the conclusion:

The Blues ain't neither that you long in sleep,
 The Blues ain't neither but a dark cloud started deep
 The Blues is a one-way ticket from your love to nowhere,
 The Blues ain't neither but a black stage set ready to tear,
 Neither, cryin', feel mean like dogs . . .
 The Blues ain't neither . . .
 The Blues ain't . . .
 The Blues . . .

And with an anguished chord the movement ends.

Again, the third movement, despite the contemporary Negro, the United States between two world wars and during the second, it is Ellington's own story and beautifully told, slipping from the last ensemble movement of the theme of the twenties on that of the thirties and the forties. The twenties were jazz, the pseudo-African movement, the Charleston, the party life. The ensemble spins that tale, quickly lightly. Then Duke's

passion enters in the lonely plaint of the single darkness, the sad reality of a people and beneath the shadows of their night life there is a new dignity, the serious side of Negro life. In explanation of this theme, Duke says, "After all, there are more churches in Harlem than gin mills." First, essentially, there is beautiful open trumpet for the cadence that was Harold Baker's most outstanding contribution; there is a change to violin solo, and a lovely little tune marks the Negro's starting for regeneration. Then saxophones, the band, Duke and Gansky present several themes, growing for education, the dream of the underfed and poorly clothed and miserably housed, the kept woman in a Super Ball penitentiary. Harry Gansky's chorale ends the music in this greatly moving melody. Finally, a brief personal note, "The Black, Brown and Beige are Red, White and Blue," signifies Duke's awareness of the war and the Negro's participation in his country's destiny and brings the movement and the whole work to a conclusion.

There was little to be said about the work. The critics on the daily newspapers were right as usual. Paul Bowles, of the *New York Tribune*, the most knowing of the classical writers in the concert and generally the most sympathetic to jazz, was disappointed because "Between these southern themes were open phonic bridges played out of tempo . . . If there is no regular beat there can be no syncopation, and there no tension, no joy . . . Nothing emerged," was Paul's and verdict, "but a gaudy pastiche of jazz dance passages and solo virtuosic work."

John Briggs in the *New York Post*, Douglas Watt in the *Daily News* and Robert Rager in the *World Telegram* generalized their disapproving responses. Briggs curdly, "Mr. Ellington had set himself a lofty goal, and with the best of intentions he did not achieve it"; Watt mildly, "... Such a form of composition is mainly out of Ellington's best"; Rager kindly, "If you ask me, Mr. Ellington can make some one dozen brief or light compositions out of Black, Brown and Beige. He should." Harry Brown in *PM* was more appreciative. He felt that the first movement "fell but left open room to many separate pieces." But he was impressed by "the extraordinary

melodic fertility of the Duke, his positively subtle rhythms and some harmonic experiments." He thought Bess "stowed, better than any of the younger players, both wit and law for him. Ellington has emancipated himself from the straitjacket of jazz formulas. He has taken a serious theme and treated it with elegance, feeling and good humor." Irving Kolodin in the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "The sheer talent that has gone into it," he said of the large work, "the number, variety and quality of the ideas, strongly affirm again that Ellington is the most creative jazz artist that has worked this field." He had a mild dream: "Only a very great amount of talent could sustain the interest forced down by the banishment of a dance band, its rhythmic conventions and clichés. One can only conclude that the belief that there it contained would count for much more if scored for a legitimate orchestra, suggested by the solo instrumental introduced the certain specific passages."

Madame and Beau Boat, the leading trade magazine in popular music, and *Billboard* and *Parade*, the entertainment weeklies most useful, were wholeheartedly enthusiastic. The latter again were impressed by the tremendous harmonic resources (ELLINGTON, AT 80 AND MURGALL, KUTLY IN GROOVE AT CARNEGIE HALL, CONCERT, and *Parade*), and the former were most taken by the impact of the music upon its listeners and the soloists (JIMMY HILL, CARNEGIE GATE, and *Billboard*).

The *AP* controversy brought to a head the whole problem of vital exposure in the small jazz forms, the place of Duke among contemporary composers and the reality of his art judged by universal standards. Gustav Kramlich, who had been a constant supporter of Ellington before and during his trip to England in 1935, a year after that visit accompanied Duke and jazz in a season of his provocative and unrelentingly exposed passages of contemporary music, *Music 1937: A Study of Music in Decline*. Though he knew "of nothing as fixed or decisive in treatment as the verted solo in the middle of the chafest *Hot* and *Redhead* and nothing as fearfully more dynamic than the final section"; though he found "the re-

quently dead and fearful the morning *Black Badge* . . . an equally remarkable piece of writing of a lyrical and harmonic order," he nonetheless decided that Ellington was "definitely a jazz master. . . . But that, after all," he said, "is considerably more than many people thought either jazz or the colored race would produce." He amplified this judgment: "Ellington's best works are written in what may be called technical record form, and he is perhaps the only composer to raise this insignificant class to the dignity of a definite genre. Less than three and a half minutes in comparison the amount, but beyond as he is inclined to handle."

There is no question that *Black, Brown and Beige* is not traditional symphonic writing; it is essentially a series of solo linked together by universal bridges. Its themes are not developed, changed and repeated in accordance with the rules of music form. It is, not already programmatic writing which is explained by an understanding of the program and an appreciation of the ideological, psychological and sociological significance of scenes of the plotline introduced in the long runs. The fact that it is not written in the concert form and therefore is not a symphony, the fact that it is programmatic, these are not hindrances from Duke's point of view or from that of sympathetic readers whose listening experience is some large way displaced Ellington's Duke, contrary to the composer himself. If his musical equipment and knowledge, could have written a symphony and would have if that were the form which best expressed his ideas and emotions about his people. He would have written a symphony or string quartet or similarly or opera, he chose, instead, to write a "new parallel" in which jazz elements, in solo and in section and in band ensemble, gave vigorous interpretation to his phrases, some rough, some tender, all colored and all directed to a narrative point.

It is not easy for those of us who have had a traditional musical education to begin to grasp with an idea of a program to mind. We have long been taught that the association of imagery with musical phrases is a banalization of them, that we are not to hear Grieg's *Love* fighting valiantly in Richard

James' Don Quixote, our special hero is a character in Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, but simply the same stuff. But the fact is that James and Hawthorne and countless other composers had these images, these stories, in mind when they wrote their music, and like artists of stature in any art, they communicated the image and stories with an unswerving directness. Certainly it is not necessary to see Don Quixote's horse leaping through the air toward the windmill, nor is it vital to have the outlines of a cactus and a man closed to appreciate the true point of James or the sympathy of Hawthorne, but neither is it necessary to strain oneself to distinguish these images from one's mind. In *Idill* there is a similar relationship of picture and tale to the music: you can take it or leave it along as easy. Your understanding and appreciation of the work will, however, be considerably heightened if you hear Duke's program in mind while listening to this music.

There are both the obvious and the subtle in *Idill*. The position of color, black as brown as beige, as the Negroes were scattered in America, mixed with the whites and changed in character as well as appearance, are obvious. The profoundest mourning of the old folk for the old way of life which they had fought against, from which they had been freed by the conquest of the Confederate armies by the Union, this is subtle, subtle on every level, the social, the psychological, and the musical. In the second section of the suite, *Stress*, Duke gives expressive voice to these people, in the baritone and lower vocal phonic *fact*, immersed in unobtrusive stridency by another *fact*, tremulous and trumpet in plunger notes. The old Negroes were free but hard-labor, insecure, their progeny were happy. Emancipation was bitter for them, unbacking, it held out hope for the hapless. This dilemma, this whole conflict is in the music.

Though anthropologists and sociologists and psychologists have been unable to elicit any statistical evidence of any inherent musical superiority among Negroes over members of other races, evidence even of any rhythmic understanding different from or greater than whites, they cannot and have not

denied the vital role of music in the lives of colored people. To Duke especially, of course, but to most of his people as well, there are musical episodes for all the great moments in American Negro history. To these, Duke has given expression in a structure as loose as the flow of music in *Black, Brown and Beige*. It may give offense to those adhered to traditional music, but it gives a people with very different education and traditions a powerful voice. The least those interested in the people can do is to listen to the music with some awareness of the meaning of *Black, Brown and Beige* to Duke and to Negroes. In his apparent forebodingness James may find a greater awareness, an understanding of the more times of Negro experience and thinking. They may or may not discover great music. They will surely find a great people.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR

JIMMY! DUKIE HOWLED DOWN THE CORRIDOR OF THE DRESSING ROOMS floor of the Cleveland Motor Hotel. It was a familiar sound, well known backstage at a few hundred theaters and just as many night clubs and many more ballrooms and club restaurants and concert halls from coast to coast. Dukie was calling for his valet, Richard Newton Jones, the man in question, strodded up to Dukie's dressing room, a broad smile on his dark face.

"Did you call me?" he asked Dukie.

"Did I call you?" Dukie turned around to ask a rhetorical question of friends and musicians gathered in his dressing room. "Did I call him?" He picked up his shirt and threw it down at the feet of Jim. Jones caught it desperately within an inch of the floor. "Jones," Dukie accused, "you're trying to make me look creepier than you. Look at that shirt, look at it." Unperturbed, Jones went happily about the task of getting Dukie together in fresh clothing. When he was all dressed, Dukie took a look at himself in the mirror. He caught what looked like a spot on the back of his coat. "Is there a spot there?" he asked Jerry Khan.

"Yes," said Jerry. "There sure is."

"Damn!" Dukie said, "you're trying to make a damned wood-chuck out of me, Jimmy. Look," he continued, facing his full audience, "the pants green spots on the back of my coat, on the middle, at the bottom, where I can't find them." Jones just gazed as Dukie worked himself up into ranting frock songs in the middle of the stairs, he walked out of the room to get

about his business of picking the music and clothes and instruments tracks and getting them changed for tracks which would transfer them to the stage.

Jones is very close to Dukie. Since 1929, when Dukie found him at the Cotton Club, a newly used barbers, he's been an constant attendance upon him, a valet, hairdresser, friend, cheer, in 1938, Dukie found himself the possessor of some hoodlums who were holding him for ransom as a spy-master. The first person he thought of was Jimmy. He caught a waiter's attention and slipped him a note he had scrawled on a menu along with the dressing which was presently holding all his attention. The note was addressed to Jimmy and asked him to get a couple of guns and come and get him right away. Reached quickly by the waiter, Jimmy hopped a car and got to the restaurant within a few minutes.

Jimmy looked around for Dukie. He spotted the table. Rushing to it, he removed the hands as he slipped Dukie a gun. The two of them, Dukie and Jimmy, left the place shooting in the air, and when they got into the car waiting for them outside, Jimmy continued to chatter from the running board, at nothing in particular, just making flowery music in the manner of Western and gangster films.

At various times in his career, Dukie has faced personal danger and at various times he, or somebody in his entourage, has "packed a horse," carried a gun usually of 37 caliber. Al Colley, who joined Dukie in 1934 as road manager, was forced that same year with such an emergency in Toronto. A good share of the band's instruments was stolen, and after one performance again borrowed home it became obvious that the musician's own trumpets and horns would have to be found and returned to them. Al, well trained by previous hard-earning experience in the wild and law of the underworld, tracked down the gang which had stolen the instruments in the Canadian trap. He caught three of the men and got them together in his hotel room.

"Now look, guys," he said, "either you produce those instruments or I'm gonna keep you or all of you out of this window

by the studio men) you tell me." He looked and talked as if he would, the mild Colley, with glasses to think one can barely make one his eyes behind them, could sometimes sound and act menacing. After a few minutes demands of my compliance on the chair and a few more bewildering suggestions of paranoias from Al in return, the criminals took Colley as where they had placed the instruments.

Al carries considerable papers around with him, contract forms, filled out or about to be returned taken, hand bills, all the complex paraphernalia of a man who is the secret business head of an enterprise which grosses over a half million dollars a year.

The Ellington reputation has grown enormously. After completing the swing crew, Duke went on to top any of his previous achievements, musical or financial. The first Carnegie concert led to two more within a year and a string of success dates all over the United States, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, Los Angeles, and a lot of smaller cities. Fans and musicians and critics all confessed his undebatable position at the top of the band heap by electing him their favorite of all jazz leaders for three years running in the *Dance Reed* poll, again in 1934 in the newly revised *Musicians* following, and in the same year in the *Esquire* poll.

One instrumental after another has been turned into a huge money making song by the addition of clever lyrics. Under publisher Jack Robbins' aegis, lyric-writer Ruth Russell put *Never No Lament* to work as *Duke's Got the Sweetest Nothin' Any More*, arranged *Concerto for George* as *Go Nothin' Tell You How* from *He and Her* and instrumental *Early in the Mornin'* about Ten Russell's writing was bright, lightly suggestive and framed by good song narratives; the collaboration paid off. So did several songs written directly with lyric-writer Don George, *I'm Beginning to See the Light* and *Don't Got Nothin'* but the Blues. Duke has formed effective song-writing combinations, based on the aesthetic level and lucrative on the financial.

Most of Duke's biggest hits have been turned out in different

publishing houses, to Jack Robbins, biggest of them, with whom he used to have an exclusive contract as Harry James' publishing firm (which Harry's name added to the list of success), to the firm founded by songwriters Johnny Burke and Jimmy Van Heusen, but he's saved some and Maybom has used more for his own credit. Tempo Blues, Tempo is run by Duke's sister Ruth and her husband, Danny James. It was just a comparatively small publishing house, but Ruth and Danny, who are the owner not only of their own business but of an entire circle of various kinds in arts and palaces, are budding it into some eminence in the field. It concentrates on such distinguished instruments as Duke the "A" Train, *Cherokee Rhapsody*, *Perdido*, *Things Ain't What They Used to Be* and *Blues That Give You Two Reasons* by Duke's son, Minton. It owns the parts of *Black, Brown and Beige* which have been chopped from the big work. And Danny and Ruth are contemplating the publication of large-scale works, those turned out by young writers of their acquaintance who are original students in the traditional forms, swing, strong quartet, symphony. Duke takes rather a paternalistic attitude toward this family alliance of his business enterprise. To his surprise, perhaps, Tempo has turned into a publishing organization of dimension, with a good catalogue, a much better than average set-off cover designs for its sheet music and such arrangements and widespread prospective plans for the future.

With both his parents gone, Duke has become patriarchal, of necessity, in all of his family. He is more than usually generous, in friends, relatives, causes. When Minton started a band of his own in 1932, Duke delighted Wexly Maybom to provide her son with manuscripts and rehearsal aid, and he himself did more than put his potent-arranger son upon the head in the way of encouragement. The musical of war was Minton into the Army, his sons after putting his own hand and stepping in and stirring again to know whether or not he has a future as a leader. But Fisher Duke did not, at least, stand on his own.

Father Duke is Grandfather Duke now. Minton, married, has a son, Edward Kennedy Ellington II. This is well as the

spiritedly scolded at his nephew Michael, Ruth and Danny's son, delight Duke, who sees a new family growing up about him. The family, and an interest in his own home, have tended to make Duke increasingly conservative in his spending and more interested in investing his money. He remains prodigal in the spending of money upon an enormous wardrobe, food, the luxuries of life generally, but he is coming about him for more permanent ways of investing his considerable income and of putting it on.

Endurance, if not permanence, has long interested Duke, the greatest possible endurance for his music, a greater endurance for himself. After his parents' death, Duke began to pay more attention to his physical condition. He developed a vigorous hypochondria that was, perhaps always latent in him. In Arthur Logan, he found a young doctor who was not only able as a medical man but whose thinking and personality were weakly sympathetic to his own. Whether it is as full as a stomach ache, or a nervous ailment, such as the illness trouble with which he has suffered for years, Duke tends to Arthur at the first warning. From out of town, Duke phones Arthur whenever he is troubled. On one memorable occasion, he had the doctor fly out to Chicago to look after him.

Arthur is one of the inner circle of Ellington associates which moves irregularly at random at what Duke calls the "Expenditures." Meeting in living rooms, between drinks, and laughter, between mirthful men like Arthur and his brother-in-law, pianist "Spunky" Adams, and Duke kick around their ideas, important and unimportant, frivolous and serious. Spunky may talk about the logic of service of Duke's musicians, charitably advised of and without parallel to jazz.

"Duke have had some care a long time," Spunky says, "and they got better all the time." He pauses. "Whatcha going to do with all that talent, Duke?"

"I have goals, Spunk, goals," Duke answers.

Duke is working hard toward goals which are almost immeasurable. His business has found grace not only in public esteem but in musicians' and his own mind it is the vehicle for formidable

large-scale musical expression. For a while, there were musicians just passing through his acceptance studio, Ben Webster, one of the great quaver among tenor saxophonists, left in 1933 after four years with Duke, and Biggie Williams took his place at the Hurricane in the last of the band's two excursions at the Broadway night club. Biggie was quickly replaced by Al Sears, who, though capable enough before joining Duke, never exhibited the drive and originality he has evidenced with Ellington. When Barney left, the clarinet chair was reduced to an unimportant adjunct of the band. Then, at the Hurricane in '35, when Toby was cut briefly, two clarinetists came in, one to replace Clarence Huggins, one to replace Toby. Jimmy Hamilton took Clarence's place, Nat Jones came in for Toby. Nat didn't last, though he turned to some sensitive Rhapsody solos. Jimmy did last, and, after two years with Ellington, added to the technical skill he exhibited earlier with Teddy Wilson and Lucky Miller as understating for Duke's use of his instruments and a creative flexibility that makes some of his solos really go.

The brass section really suffered when Harold Baker left to join the Army, in 1934, but it had already been recruited by the addition of Tub Jordan in '35, and Shaban Shamfield, who took Harold's place, is a big toned first trumpeter—Louis Armstrong calls him "the first best trumpeter of our race." Tub came in for Rex, who left the band for a while when it first came into the Hurricane. Jordan, the former Chick Webb trumpeter, showed when business in Chick's band had known for years, that he was a brilliant disciple of Armstrong, good as a blaring-again trumpeter, just as good playing rhythm-and-beat horns. He had ample opportunity to play the latter during Duke's memorable ten-day night stand of radio shows over the Mutual Broadcasting System, during the six month Hurricane stay in 1933. The show was called *Radio Parade*; it was music at the piano or passionate volume, music that set the soft, sensitive mood Duke calls "pared." When he wants to set that kind of mood, presently soul-soothing mood, Duke not only writes with the lowest dynamics in mind, he also calls to his men. "This is pared," he says, and they blow accordingly. In the summer of 1933, business went

trained to a remarkable series of radio programs in which this medium was employed as its medium, but to give light but not extravagant amplification to chosen sounds which are more often than not lost in the night stills or even the concert hall.

When Ben returned to the band, Duke kept Tilt, of course, and Humphall (known as "Red" rather than by the more dignified Christian name of Rufus, which just doesn't suit his snaking sound but and money figure), who, along with Mince and Gus Anderson, added shortly before the December, 1944, Carnegie concert. Killed out the transports to a quarter, Cat's sickness stemmed at the atrocious regime of his instrument. Miking music which is as loud as anything anyone but a dog hearing, was the big lack of this concert for the audience, which received his work in that register as well as lower down, with focused attention. Just Tilt left Duke earlier in 1944, to take a place with Harry James as vibro accompanist. Claude Jones, who replaced him, was virtuous on his instrument and has played with most of the great colored bands at one time or another. He isn't as imaginative a musician as Tilt, nor has he open the party of new white jazz products on the scene, but he is an excellent musician. Duke calls an ancient man a "typical Turner." Tilt was a "typical Turner" as a soloist; his greatest contribution to the band was as arranger and arranger of concert, the past master is Turkay, Coleman, Swing, Mince Over Cuts, music which reflected his native Puerto Rican rhythms. But neither these nor his unsurprisingly able written work made him as valuable, objectively, as the intensity with which Duke deplores his loss would lead one to believe.

Tilt did not leave only for the obvious reason, the greater money and prominence he and his music would receive with one of the country's two or three most successful white bands. He wanted to stay in California, where Harry spends most of his time working in the motion picture and playing radio commercials. At one time or another most of the members of the Ellington band have expressed a desire to settle down, preferably in California, and several have taken vacations which threatened to turn into emigration. The one-nighter schedule

which all bands play a rough on musicians; colored bands play even nastier times than the white, even the big colored bands, because the first option there is to have to over go put one of the country's leading locations, hotels or night clubs, where they might be able to play long runs. Playing one-nighters is a grueling experience, four hundred mile jumps as coaches by day or even dozens by night, sometimes by trucking, leaving houses in involves every kind of sleeping accommodation, and as the case of colored musicians there are often not too comfortable. And there are the many problems which a colored musician must live away from home.

When Richard D. Boyer wrote his three-part profile of Duke for the *New Yorker* magazine in 1944, he told a story about the Ellington musicians' eating problems. In the story, Jack Boyd, then the road manager of the band, was at a table near the Fox Theatre in St. Louis, from which you could see the stage down. The boys in the band had been trying to get food sent to them, because the theater was in the white section of town, where they would not be wanted upon. They had sent a white man out to try to get sandwiches for them from a drugstore but had gone hungry when the store proprietors found that the sandwiches were for a Negro band. The musicians were hungry, angry. The theater manager admitted that they had to eat and he arranged for food to be sent to the theater. One of the men left the theater to get something for himself. He left by the stage door and got into a taxi.

"Did you see that?" asked a woman seated on a stool near Boyd at the table.

"See what? Boyd said,

"See that nigger get into that taxi?"

"Well, he's a pretty nice fellow. He's a member of the Ellington band, some people think he's a very good artist."

"A very good artist? Well, I don't know what you think, but I always say that the worst white man is better than the best nigger."

Actually, the experience happened to Boyd, not to Boyd. Boyd was shocked throughout his travels with the band to dis-

cover the loneliness and lagoon which even Niagara at the mouth of Duke and his musicians must face. The doors of men to get off the road, when they have been taking them wide for over twenty years, is quite understandable.

How long Duke will continue with this routine is hardly predictable. The money is pretty good and he has an astounding capacity for enjoying himself in almost any surroundings. The days of depression, of personal gloom and melancholy, are over for Duke. When something is unpleasant, he turns it away as if it were a joke. Somebody bothers cheerfully in or near his dressing room. "Don't yell so loud," Duke says. "You always try to act so meanish!" Johnny or Jerry Rhea, who is often an annoyance upon Duke, may target in pull down the shades of his dressing-room window when giving him a message. Lying there nude, his huge body visible through the window, Duke spins the mood shades. "Pull those shades down," he says. "I'm not going the least bit of a show in these prices."

Duke's business affairs are in good hands. William Morris handles his bookings; he has a personal accountant to keep his books. He is on good terms with song publishers, songpluggers, most of the men of taste or great reputation or popular means. He has found a good deal of the peace and calm he told Mildred he wanted so badly.

"I'm a vain book," Duke says, explaining another of the reasons he is so little bothered by the current and clamorous of new captives. "I love everything about a man, from the crotch up to the lady tender behind." Duke laughs a minute after his explanation. "Och," he says, "I'm funny!"

"You are," he continues. "I don't worry any more. Everybody thinks those great cracks under my eyes are the result of worry. No, no. My bags are the accumulation of virtue and a few heavy laughs. I don't worry."

Duke has a great love of mistakes and it delights him to watch anybody with any particular taste, with any sort of shyness or whatever, perform. When a man runs over, then he does (which is doing a great deal) or drinks a great deal (which is much more than Duke does) or talks with an excessive vocal-

ity, perhaps, Duke looks on with wonder. "He's a tough man," he will say in compliment, "he walks on the two-toes and has toes on the walrus."

On the long even sides, Thickly Sam made First or any other signature of his. He has a hard ball of muscles and solid form, and he is constantly gathering more. Thick Handball may engage somebody in conversation about the progress of the world. "Take the value of justice," he says, "have you ever noticed that one side is always lower than the other? Just like the world, just like the world." If someone is around, he may join Thick to add a few words of cheerful doors to the pattern of gloom. A lot of the mistakes, but particularly Johnny Hudges and his wife and Walt and Gus and the other newcomers and Freddie Gay and Carney, will play cards. They play "Bad Dog," a lot, a gambling game which Jack Thiel learned in the Harry James band and taught to his old bandmate. It looks simple at first glance, but it involves complicated holding and a great turnover of the unscrupulous pot. Duke plays cards with Al Lewis, "a gentleman," Duke explains, "a gentleman always, from whom it is a pleasure to take money." Duke usually beats Al. Lawrence Brown made or thinks Junior Ruffin, who replaced Blanton, made some books. Somebody may have a drink.

"The shade you got to finish," Thickly says and adds, "Don't mind if I do," as he helps himself to a drink. "The day you're put in soap," he continues.

When Jerry Rhea is sleep, he and Thick and Henry will get together and discuss old times in Washington. "Lucky White from Long Branch," Jerry says, stopping his tale and handing on the book to Henry. Henry will go away as much eager to listen to one of singer Jope Merrill's amusing stories as somebody who has been trying to make a joke at last.

"You haven't lived," Jope barks, "until you've known me. I hope you did with that thought on your lips."

Jope rejoined the band in 1932, along with three other girl singers. They were Duke's replacements for Winn Johnson, the very beautiful girl who replaced Perry Rothe in 1929. Winn left to marry a Cleveland doctor, taking a lovely face and light

from the organist but not depriving it of any great value. Jeps, who had been with the band earlier, was one of them. She had developed into a good jazz singer with a delightful personality, fresh, vivacious, always on the go, a perfect complement for her part figure. Ray Brown, who holds a Master of Arts degree from Northwestern University, has a trained lyric soprano voice, which Duke used for a while only to sing luscious obbligatos in one old work, *Grease Live Gals*, and one new one, *Just Got Riches!* But the *Blues*. Her trained soprano cleared the moments that she was "the only one that's a harmonium." On the Thursday afternoon following President Roosevelt's death, April 12, 1945, when Duke's was the only dance band on the streets during a seventy-two-hour period, Ray sang again. She sang the Negro spiritual, *Caly Called Moses*, and sang it with such beautiful quality of voice and feeling that history wrote and word and pleased to ask if Milton Anderson had been singing with Duke. After that Ray got more to do. *Rockin' Road* did not stay with the band very long, and Miss Ellington (as nickname of Duke's) continued Roosevelt's dance with her own. Through all the dinner date's odd up to lunch, it was enough to show Duke as an able girl who did as much as possible with meager materials, usually with a pronounced New England accent. Like Ray and Jeps, though in a very different way, Marie is extremely attractive. All are hot. Ray with legs, Marie and Jeps with hair. Ray's is a kind of baby hair, bright and new. Jeps' much like that, though more mysterious-looking, and Marie's is one that shows a sophistication matching her clothing.

All Hibbler is the other Ellington singer. Al, who has been blind since birth, lost confidence for Duke in his native Leno, Ark., in 1930. Duke took him and told him to come and meet him at his table later the same day. Al was amazed and delighted at being taken by the great Ellington that he immediately went to a bar and got high. He showed up at the table, but Duke was distracted to take him when he saw his state. A few years later Hibbler turned up at New York with another band, Jay McRae's. When that amazing group once

broke into a few parts in 1932, with Jeps's departure for the Army, Al took jobs in a single second New York. One night at the Hammer in 1933, Ben Webster spotted him at a table. He noticed that he sang with the band, brought him up to the stand, thrust him before a microphone and said, "Now sing." Al sang *Swanee* and was hired on the spot.

When Duke hears criticism of Al's non-flourishing and weak way to begin the meaning of a song's lyrics for a great power that may be purpose lower register, he answers it deftly. "Hibbler's no singer," Duke says, "he's a non-participant. What other singer creates such good music?"

There has been a lot of criticism of Duke for carrying two singers, the three girls and Hibbler, in addition to Tish and Marie, who sing occasionally. It comes mainly from those who admire the unquestionable talents of the two women, who say four-note rhythm singers, but find the girls and Al less creative because they are less absolutely "groovy"—that is, that they sing with less interest in the beat. That is as Duke wants it. On his series of Saturday afternoon programs for the Treasury Department, during most of 1945, he introduced the girls and Hibbler singing in new arrangements of such Ellington overtures as *Solitude* and *It Don't Mean a Thing*. Here they are used as vocal instruments, singing parts in a vocal section which has been added to the band in one night and vision as French horns. The effect is astounding: it is another example of Duke's ability to keep going forward, to keep from doing the backward and the unthoughtful.

What else I live for? Duke asked in one of his 1942 compositions, an instrumental statement of the metaphysical inquiry. Sometimes Duke finds the question puzzling, though it rarely opens him. He has an unquestioning religious faith which leaves him without serious worries or speculations, a cross of his father's Methodism and his mother's Baptist beliefs. He says Grace before each meal and prays at night and recites a Psalm every time from the Bible before singing. A girl once, a girl from his class, is always about his neck. "My religion," Duke says, "gives me an edge. It makes me feel I have the edge over my

opponents, even opponents of any kind. Beyond a certain point I have nothing to worry about. I have a certain power as a result of my faith."

Duke doesn't worry "beyond a certain point," but he can be concerned about criticism of his music. When most of the New York critics were so severe in their reviews of *Black, Brown and Beige*, he quickly accepted their criticism. He broke the long work into a series of excerpts of less than half the length of the original and introduced them at the Carnegie Hall concert of December 11, 1932. He played them again at the concert at Carnegie a year later, on December 12. He recorded *BBB* in excerpt form, too, telling wherever changes might have seemed for better performance of the complete work. When the critics demanded the more ambitious of his new works introduced at the December, 1932, concert, a composition for piano and orchestra, *New World A-Coming*, he dropped it. The title of this twelve-minute work was taken in optimistic gratitude from Ben Cukley's best-selling book about Negro life, but Duke did not accept the enthusiastic spirit of the book.

Duke knows that his band has improved, that, for all the dissatisfactions and the expenses and the trouble it incurs as it becomes more of a disciplined organization and less of a co-operative social unit, its musical excellence has steadily increased. He has watched with satisfaction the intense reaction of his audience, others by almost all the distinguished white bands of the big cities and the best, most socially and most successfully by Charlie Barnet, Hal Mayhew and Woody Herman, in chronological order. But with all the public admiration, the flattering attention and the clear adoration of his band, he has not found absolute musical security. This explains the lack of courage behind the withdrawing of *BBB* and the dropping of *New World A-Coming*. It also explains his unrelenting anxiety to back his career.

"I have two careers," Duke says, "and they must not be confused, though they almost always are. I am a bandleader and I am a composer. Sometimes I compose for the band, sometimes I compose for other organizations, sometimes I compose in a

vacuum. What I'm trying to do with my band is to win people over to my bigger composing ideas. That's why I paired down *A, B and C*. You gotta make 'em jump first, listen to things like *Don't Get Around Much and Be Mother's*. Then, when they've heard that, maybe they'll say, 'Gee, this guy isn't so bad at all,' and they'll listen to the longer and more ambitious works and maybe even enjoy them. Yes, *I'm Beginning to See the Light* is the new work song."

It is almost impossible to determine whether or not his audience understand and appreciate and enjoy Duke a longer, more ambitious work. For the audiences are larger than ever before, and more and more of them are coming to be dedicated to the music of his music as his fellow jazz musicians have been since 1927, when he went into the Cotton Club. There is every reason for Duke to take music to heart and play anything he wants for the receptive audiences which would bring him more in American cities, in Europe and anywhere else he wants to go. If he feels strange to do so, if he does not have an absolute sense of security in his music, it is because of many things. It is because of the complexity of his career. It is because of the streak of persecuted masochism in him which will not permit him to enjoy anything too much. It is because of a great sense of boundary. "I have talent," Duke says. "If only I could apply myself!"

Duke's humility and politeness have provided him with an considerable amount of the drive which keeps him and his music working and progressing. The *darkness might praise him*, the politicians would surely disapprove of the second, but more than likely, if a moral judgment is at play here, both are vital to the man. And, fortunately for him as a member of a persecuted minority, he has rarely encountered either to a sense of moral inferiority or to an acceptance of the underdog rule for which America seemed for so long to denounce people of his color. He did accept some of the narrow racial doctrine by which he determined that his was Negro music and not jazz or any other differently named art form. But, significantly, in the broad exposure for his talents and experiences as a Negro

and those of his people, in his music, he became less and less of a musician in the strict. Today Duke Ellington speaks of his band as American. "It is an American band, because it has democratic blood," Duke says. "Each man is an individual with a personality and a voice." And he speaks of his music as American. He gives voice to the sound and rhythm of Negroes in his music, but only as part of the genius trained and well-acrossed driving tempo of the United States as a whole. Thinking a typically democratic deed he has encouraged for a composition, he will play it on the record or at the piano. "That's the Negro's life," he explains. "Hear that drum! That's in. Democracy is our way of life in America. We are something apart, yet an integral part."

As the Negroes fight for equality, his occupation on every plane of human activity in America, Duke's music fights with them. To some, this gives his work greater sociological meaning than music, which is the height of grace or the depth of scorn, depending on the aesthetic philosophy. To others, the music has social value without being the musical to them, it can be judged equally well with either set of standards or both. However it is judged, this is the music of our time, the music of America, music which has crossed both the color line and the equally formidable barriers of traditional musical rules.

A COMPLETE DUKE ELLINGTON DISCOGRAPHY

On the previous pages you will find a complete list of Duke Ellington's records. It is as complete as the research of discophiles working on both sides of the Atlantic, over a period of more than a decade, have been able to make it. Those include Charles Delaney in France, John Hammond and John Lord in the United States. Lord, an employee of the RCA Victor Company, prepared a discography of all the Ellington records made for Victor listing their master numbers and personnel and the dates of recording. There was a similar information available for the Okeh and Vocalion and Brunswick and Columbia and countless smaller labels for which Duke recorded. Perhaps, some day, a record scholar, driven mad for more of this information, will devoted more to the files of the Columbia Record Corporation and those of Brunswick before 1931, now in Decca's keeping, and will search Rode's files. In the mean time, we are able at least to name the years in which just about all of Duke's records were made, and that is really sufficient to chart the musical progress of the Ellington band and its companion singer leaders.

The titles of the records have considerable significance. Some are chosen, standardized by the language of the band (Washington Warble, *March, Swing, Blues, Ballad, Dance, Serenade to Sweden*, for example). Others are the title upon which the band had been playing (*Cotton Club Swing, German Raggle*). Others are direct allusions to tempo (*Swing, Swanky Blues, Mambo*). The latter, a significant record of early inspiration, pops up first and again either directly as a name (*First Piano Blues*), or in metaphorical description (*First Rumble*). Some titles tell nothing at all by themselves (*Never for a Lost Love, When a Black Man's First, Golden Fiddly*). Some titles are reflections of the musicians' vocabulary in the time they were recorded. *Wop* (that is a young woman who takes her way around, *Raggy Rag* refers to an off-beat place. Some titles are a

seem to make any sense, but they have meaning to Duke in himself—*that's why they have meaning*. Old King Dooey, for example, refers to an African King. There are several poems by the dozens (*Quint and Quint on the Streets*, *Star Light, Star Bright*, *Bluesy Bluesy*, *Bluesy Valley*) which describe scenes or times or places or simple spots. There are descriptions of feelings and straightforward narratives. Taking up each of Duke's records, one could fill a book twice as long as this one, just in classifying the music, naming the musical forms and the artists and explaining the meaning of the title.

It is not really necessary, in any of these shorter works of Ellington, to make literary contact with the thought in Duke's mind, or its feelings or its truth or the intention, when they were written and recorded. Like most good short works of art, they communicate these feelings and purposes directly. It helps to be able to tell the difference between a short stanza (or sentence) and a regular song chorus (as measured) and then to note Duke's departures from and variations upon those forms. It helps to be able to spot motifs once from key to key and the experience with which melody and rhythm are stored and organized harmonically. It helps to have something closer to the technique of jazz, which is so reasonable and so susceptible to analysis in that of traditional music, from which it springs. To know this technique to appreciate the variety of the jazz style, especially the blues style with its flattened third and seventh, is to hear notes that just lively rhythms and structures refer to the music. But whether or not you know and understand these things, listening to his records will carry you beyond enjoyment to recognition of the artists of Ellington and the character, tone, mood and ideas of his records. To make the acquaintance of this extraordinary group of musicians is a useful experience. It is nothing less than a direct introduction to the meaning of American's most original contribution to the arts, jazz, the major source of its great ideas and the greatest influence upon those who have reached these ideas.

THE ELLINGTON WASHINGTONIANS

Harry Cooper, LaRue Rolden, Trumpets; Charlie Irvin, Tenor Sax; Gus Harwick, Alto and Baritone Sax; Duke Ellington, Piano; Fred Guy, Bass; Sam Edwards, Bass; Sonny Green, Drums.

JOE MALL
ALABAMA TOUR

1937

COMPLETE DUKE ELLINGTON DISCOGRAPHY 1935

If You Can't Shake Them Man Co 3593, De 3593
You've Got Them Wanda Go Back Again Co 3594, De 3594
Piano

Charlie Johnson, Bobby Miller, Trumpets; Charlie Irvin, Tenor Sax; Gus Harwick, Baritone Sax; Duke Ellington, Piano; Fred Guy, Bass; Sam Edwards, Bass; Sonny Green, Drums

ARMED AND DANGEROUS (1935) Co 3595
Lafayette (1935) Co 3596

No other pressings for these records are available

Early Day (1935) De 3597
Danton Danton Danton De 3598, De 3598
Georgia Gumbo De 3599, De 3599
Thousand Miles (1935) De 3599
The Gamma House Joanne My House (1935) De 3599

THE WASHINGTONIANS

Bobby Miller, Trumpet; Joe Hanson, Trombone; Baby Jackson, Clarinet and Tenor Sax; Gus Harwick, Clarinet and Alto Sax; Harry Carey, Alto and Baritone Sax; Duke Ellington, Piano; Fred Guy, Bass; Unknown, Bass; Sonny Green, Drums

1937

Early Call Man (1937) De 3599, De 3599
Sweet Mama (1937) De 3599, De 3599
Sweet Mama (1937) De 3599
Early In Love (1937) De 3599
Sweet Mama (1937) De 3599
Sweet Mama (1937) De 3599
Sweet Mama (1937) De 3599
Sweet Mama (1937) De 3599
Sweet Mama (1937) De 3599
Sweet Mama (1937) De 3599

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS KENTUCKY CLUB ORCHESTRA

Bobby Miller, Louis Metell, Trumpets; Joe Hanson, Trombone; Baby Jackson, Tenor Sax; Gus Harwick, Alto Sax; Harry Carey, Alto and Baritone Sax; Duke Ellington, Piano; Fred Guy, Bass; Unknown, Bass; Sonny Green, Drums

1931

Easy St. Louis Tenor-Cl. (44292)	Co 442
Hot House (44293)	Co 443
Down to Your Feet Blues (44294)	Co 444
Easy St. Louis Tenor-Cl. (44295)	Re 445, Vi 445
Frantic-Frantic Frantic	Re 446, Vi 446
Ten Cents	Vi 447
Swingtime	Vi 448
Some of the Goodies from	Vi 449
New Orleans Low Down	Vi 450
Down to Your Feet (44300)	Vi 451
Easy Hot House (44301)	Vi 452
Blues and Ten Cents	Vi 453, Me 453, Re 453
Swingtime	Re 454, Vi 454
Down to Your Feet (44302)	Re 455, Me 455, Vi 455
Easy St. Louis Tenor-Cl. (44303)	Co 456, Me 456
Down to Your Feet (44304)	Co 457, Me 457
Blues and Ten Cents (44305)	Co 458

Various personnel for the Ellington Sextet: GEORGE SYMPSON for Me 453; WYCHESTER MASON for Re 454; EARL JARDON and HIS ORCHESTRA for Me 455; THE LIPPERMAGERS for Re 457.

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

John Smith, Trumpet; Joe Hanson, Trombone; Rudy Jackson, Clarinet and Alto Sax, Otto Hardwick, Clarinet and Alto Sax; Harry Carey, Alto and Baritone Sax; Duke Ellington, Piano; Fred Gay, Bass; William Brand, Sax; Sonny Greer, Drums.

1932

What Can a Poor Fellow Do (44312)	Co 459
Blues and Ten Cents (44313)	Re 460, Vi 460, Co 460
Blues and Ten Cents (44314)	Re 461, Vi 461, Co 461
Down to Your Feet (44315)	Co 462

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Budby Miles, Louis Morell, Trumpet; Joe Hanson, Trombone; Otto Hardwick, Alto Sax and Clarinet; Harry Carey, Alto Sax and Baritone Sax; Rudy Jackson, Tenor Sax and Clarinet; Duke Ellington, Piano; Fred Gay, Bass; William Brand, Sax; Sonny Greer, Drums; Adelaide Hall, * Vocal.

New York City, October 24, 1932

* Down to Your Feet (44316)	Vi 462, Re 462
Blues and Ten Cents (44317)	Vi 463, Re 463
* Blues and Ten Cents (44318)	Vi 464, Re 464, Co 464
Maximum Blues (44319)	Vi 465, Re 465

New York City, December 19, 1932

Down to Your Feet (44320)	Vi 466, Re 466
Easy St. Louis Tenor-Cl. (44321)	Vi 467, Re 467
Down to Your Feet (44322)	Vi 468, Re 468

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Budby Miles, Louis Morell, Arthur Wheland, Trumpet; Joe Hanson, Trombone; Otto Hardwick, Alto Sax, Harry Carey, Alto and Baritone Sax; Sonny Greer, Tenor Sax and Clarinet; Duke Ellington, Piano; Fred Gay, Bass; William Brand, Sax; Sonny Greer, Drums.

New York City, March 24, 1933

Blues and Ten Cents (44323)	Vi 469, Re 469
Down to Your Feet (44324)	Vi 470, Re 470, Co 470
Get Excited and Hot (44325)	Vi 471, Re 471, Co 471

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Budby Miles, Louis Morell, Arthur Wheland, Trumpet; Joe Hanson, Trombone; Sonny Greer, Tenor Sax and Clarinet; Harry Carey, Alto Sax and Baritone Sax; Otto Hardwick, Alto Sax; Duke Ellington, Piano; Fred Gay, Bass; William Brand, Sax; Sonny Greer, Drums.

1934

Ten to Ten (44326)	Co 463
Down to Your Feet (44327)	Co 464
Blues and Ten Cents (44328)	Co 465

Johnny Hodges (Alto and Baritone Sax) in place of Otto Hardwick.

* Listed under the title "Down to Your Feet" and "The Blues Revisited."

New York City, January 26, 1929

Same personnel with the exception of Freddy Jenkins and Otto Hardwick.

Flamingo Youth (1914)	Vi 1914, 1929, 1931
Boys and Girls Choir (1914)	Vi 1914, Vi 1929, 1931, 1932
Black List (1914)	Vi 1914, 1931
Harlem News Function (1914)	Vi 1914, Vi 1929

New York City, February 26, 1929

Jazzing Dances (1914)	Vi 1914
Harmonies (1914)	Vi 1914, 1929

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS COTTON CLUB ORCHESTRA

Conrad Williams, Arthur Wheland, Freddy Jenkins, Trombone, Joe Nathan, Trumbone, Johnny Hodges, Alto and Soprano Saxs, Harry Carney, Alto and Baritone Saxs, Barney Bigard, Tenor Sax and Clarinet, Duke Ellington, Piano, Fred Gage, Banjo, William Brand, Bass, Sonny Green, Drums.

New York City, March 5, 1929

Ten Dots Club (1914)	Vi 1914, 1931
Swingtime (1914)	Vi 1914, 1931
Hot Feet (1914) (Conrad Williams, Fred)	Vi 1914, 1931
Harlem Joe (1914) (Sonny Green, Fred)	Vi 1914, 1931

New York City, May 5, 1929

Cotton Club Dances (1914)	Vi 1914, 1931
Amazing Lovers (1914)	Vi 1914, 1931
Hot Moments (1914)	Vi 1914, 1931

(Conrad Williams, Trombone; Barney Bigard, Clarinet; Johnny Hodges, Alto Sax, and Rhythm Section on 1914 only.)

Swingtime Dances (1914) Vi 1914, 1931, 1932

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Conrad Williams, Arthur Wheland, Freddy Jenkins, Trombone, Joe Nathan, Trumbone, Johnny Hodges, Alto and Soprano Saxs, Harry Carney, Alto and Baritone Saxs, Barney Bigard, Tenor Sax

COMPLETE DUKE ELLINGTON DISCOGRAPHY 181

and Clarinet, Duke Ellington, Piano; Fred Gage, Banjo, William Brand, Bass; Sonny Green, Drums.

April, 1929

I Must Have That Man ¹ (1914)	Cell 1914
Passion and Melancholy (1914)	Co 1914
Musicians' Blues ² (1914)	Co 1914, Co 1914
Harlem's Blues ² (1914)	Co 1914, 1914
Harlem's Blues (1914)	Co 1914, 1914
That Evening Man (1914)	Co 1914

DUKE ELLINGTON'S ORCHESTRA

Conrad Williams, Arthur Wheland, Trombone; Duke Brown, Joe Nathan, Joe Trumbone, Johnny Hodges, Alto and Soprano Saxs, Harry Carney, Alto and Baritone Saxs, Barney Bigard, Tenor Sax and Clarinet, Duke Ellington, Piano, Fred Gage, Banjo, William Brand, Bass, Sonny Green, Drums.

New York City, September 18, 1929

Musicians' Blues (1914)	Vi 1914, 1931
Swingtime (1914)	Vi 1914, 1931, 1931
That Evening Man (1914)	Vi 1914, 1931
Harlem's Blues (1914)	Vi 1914, 1931

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS COTTON CLUB ORCHESTRA

Conrad Williams, Arthur Wheland, Freddy Jenkins, Trombone, Joe Nathan, Joe Trumbone, Johnny Hodges, Alto and Soprano Saxs, Harry Carney, Alto and Baritone Saxs, Barney Bigard, Tenor Sax and Clarinet, Duke Ellington, Piano, Fred Gage, Banjo, William Brand, Bass, Sonny Green, Drums.

New York City, November 14, 1929

Swingtime Dances (1914)	Vi 1914, 1931
Musicians' Blues (1914)	Vi 1914
Hot List (1914)	Vi 1914, 1931

Same personnel with the exception of Freddy Jenkins.

¹ Based on the title "The Blues and the Bluesy Blues."

² Based on the title "Swingtime Dances."

New York City, April 12, 1930

Swanee Goose Swans (22412)	Vi 2142, Bk 2142
My Gas Is Gone (on National and Love) (22413)	Vi 2143
I Was Born To Love You (22414)	Vi 2144

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS COTTON CLUB ORCHESTRA

Costa Williams, Arthur Whelan, Freddy Jenkins, Thompson, Joe Nanton, Juan Tami, Trombones, Johnny Hodges, alto and soprano sax, Harry Carney, alto and baritone sax, Harvey Egbert, Tenor Sax and Clarinet, Duke Ellington, Piano, Fred Guy, Bass, William Brand, Drm, Sonny Carter, Drums.

New York City, June 4, 1930

Swanee Goose on Love (22415)	Vi 2145
Swanee Goose on Love (22416)	Vi 2146
Swanee Goose on Love (22417)	Vi 2147, Bk 2147
Swanee Goose on Love (22418)	Vi 2148, Bk 2148

Hollywood, August 20 and 21, 1930

One Man's Love (22419)	Vi 2149, Bk 2149
One Man's Love (22420) (Costa Williams, Piano)	Vi 2150, Bk 2150
One Man's Love (22421)	Vi 2151, Bk 2151

New York City, October 4, 1930

Swanee Goose (22422)	Vi 2152
Swanee Goose (22423)	Vi 2153
Swanee Goose (22424)	Vi 2154
Swanee Goose (22425)	Vi 2155, Bk 2155

November 21, 1930

Swanee Goose (22426)	Vi 2156
Swanee Goose (22427)	Vi 2157
Swanee Goose (22428)	Vi 2158

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

1931

Swanee Goose (22429)	Co 2159, Bk 2159, Or 2159
Swanee Goose (22430)	Co 2160, Or 2160

COMPLETE DUKE ELLINGTON DISCOGRAPHY 189

Swanee Goose (22431)	Or 2161
Swanee Goose (22432)	Or 2162
Swanee Goose (22433)	Or 2163
Swanee Goose (22434)	Co 2164, Or 2164
Swanee Goose (22435)	Or 2165

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS COTTON CLUB ORCHESTRA

Costa Williams, Arthur Whelan, Freddy Jenkins, Thompson, Joe Nanton, Juan Tami, Trombones, Johnny Hodges, alto and soprano sax, Harry Carney, alto and baritone sax, Harvey Egbert, Tenor Sax and Clarinet, Duke Ellington, Piano, Fred Guy, Bass, William Brand, Drm, Sonny Carter, Drums.

November 21, 1930

Swanee Goose (22436)	Vi 2166
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New York City, December 19, 1930

Swanee Goose (22437)	Vi 2167, Bk 2167
Swanee Goose (22438)	Vi 2168
Swanee Goose (22439) (Dick Robertson, Piano)	Vi 2169

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Costa Williams, Arthur Whelan, Freddy Jenkins, Thompson, Joe Nanton, Juan Tami, Trombones, Johnny Hodges, alto and soprano sax, Harry Carney, alto and baritone sax, Harvey Egbert, Tenor Sax and Clarinet, Duke Ellington, Piano, Fred Guy, Bass, William Brand, Drm, Sonny Carter, Drums.

New York City, January 4, 1931

Swanee Goose (22440)	Vi 2170
Swanee Goose (22441)	Vi 2171, Bk 2171
Swanee Goose (22442) (Dick Robertson, Piano)	Vi 2172

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Swanee Goose (22443)	Vi 2173
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1 Originally listed under the title "Swanee Goose"

Camden, N. J., June 16, 1934

Carole Knepper—PART 1 (1934)	Vi 4144
Carole Knepper—PART 2 (1934)	Vi 4145

Camden, N. J., June 16, 1934

Lawrence Brown (1934)	Vi 4146
Encores of the Jambal (1934)	Vi 4147

Camden, N. J., June 17, 1934

It's Good (1934)	Warner, Br 1004
Tom Morrison Song (1934)	Warner, Br 1004

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Carole Williams, Arthur Wheland, Freddy Jackson, Trombone; Joe Nanton, Joe Tami, Truett-trombone; Johnny Hodges, Alto and Soprano Sax; Harry Carey, Alto and Soprano Sax; Sonny Sigurd, Tenor Sax and Clarinet; Duke Ellington, Piano; Fred Guy, Drums; Williams Band, Bass, Sonny Good, Drums.

(The following two recordings were recorded as duet-chorus and a band RPH.)

Moon House—Hot and Bothered—Carole Love Call (duet)	Vi 4148
Hot It Love Trouble—Hot It Love Trouble—Bass and Tenor (duet)	Vi 4149

New York City, February 9, 1935

Down (duet)	Vi 4150
Down Case Law (duet)	Vi 4151

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA

1935

Carole Knepper (PART 1 & 2) Br 4152

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA

Carole Williams, Arthur Wheland, Freddy Jackson, Trombone; Joe Nanton, Joe Tami, Lawrence Brown, Truett-trombone; Johnny

Hodges, Alto and Soprano Sax; Duke Henderson, Alto Sax, Sonny Sigurd, Tenor Sax and Clarinet, Harry Carey, Soprano Sax, Duke Ellington, Piano; Fred Guy, Drums; Williams Band, Bass; Sonny Good, Drums.

1935

It's Good (1934) (duet)	Br 4153
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4154
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4155
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4156
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4157
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4158
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4159
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4160
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4161
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4162
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4163
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4164
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4165
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4166
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4167
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4168
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4169
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4170
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4171
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4172
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4173
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4174
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4175
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4176
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4177
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4178
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4179
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4180
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4181
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4182
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4183
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4184
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4185
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4186
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4187
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4188
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4189
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4190
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4191
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4192
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4193
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4194
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4195
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4196
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4197
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4198
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4199
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4200

BLACKBIRDS OF THE

Blackbirds of the (1935)	Br 4201
Blackbirds of the (1935)	Br 4202

ETHEL WATERS (Vocal) with Duke Ellington's Orchestra

It's Good (1934) (duet)	Br 4203
Down Case Law (1934)	Br 4204

* Different name and No. Columbia label.

ADOLPHUS HALL (Social) with Duke Ellington's Orchestra

1 Many Stars Tint Mass (1977) B 1948
 Mass (1974) B 1948

MILLS BROTHERS (Vocal) with Duke Ellington's Orchestra

Blue Dots Duo (1974) B 1944

1944-1948

Harvey Blue (1948) B 1947
 Blue Ma Out at Harlem (1948) Co 1947 B 1947

Joe Garland (Four Star) in place of Egard in the new show only.

Kaiser von Kaiser (1948) B 1947
 Havin at the Day in Love (1948) B 1947

Get Yourself a New Name (1948)

Stronger Woman (1948) B 1948

Swampy Lake (1948) B 1948

Smile or Frown (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Joe Street (1948) B 1948

Joe Street (1948) B 1948

Harlem Blues (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

In the Room of the One Star Tint (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Many Co. Name (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Swampy Lake (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Joe Street (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Joe Street (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Joe Street (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Joe Street (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Joe Street (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Joe Street (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Joe Street (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Joe Street (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Joe Street (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Joe Street (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Joe Street (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Joe Street (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Joe Street (1948) Co 1948 B 1948

Harry Egard, Four Star and Clever, Harry Carey, Service
 Joe, Duke Ellington, Four, Fred Kay, Gator, William David,
 Ann, Harry Davis, Drums.

Chicago, September 25, 1942

Blue Dots Duo (1942) Louis Brown, Vocal B 1942
 Blue Dots Duo (1942) B 1942

Chicago, December 5, 1942

Blue Dots Duo (1942) Louis Brown, Vocal B 1942
 Blue Dots Duo (1942) B 1942
 Blue Dots Duo (1942) B 1942

Chicago, January 5, 1943

Blue Dots Duo (1943) B 1943
 Blue Dots Duo (1943) B 1943

Chicago, January 16, 1943

Blue Dots Duo (1943) B 1943
 Blue Dots Duo (1943) B 1943

George Williams, Arthur Whitely, Freddy Jackson, Frankie,
 Joe Martin, Lawrence Brown, Tremaine, Johnny Hodges, Al
 and Supreme Blues, Harry Carey, Al and Supreme Blues, Harry
 Egard, Four Star and Clever, Duke Ellington, Four, Fred Kay,
 Gator, William David, Ann, Harry Davis, Drums, Two Anderson,
 * Fred.

Hollywood, April 18, 1944

* Harry Egard (1944) B 1944, 1944
 Blue Dots Duo (1944) B 1944
 Blue Dots Duo (1944) B 1944

Hollywood, April 27, 1944

Blue Dots Duo (1944) B 1944
 Blue Dots Duo (1944) B 1944

1 Mr. Mr. Woman (1944) B 1944, 1944

Hollywood, May 4, 1944

Blue Dots Duo (1944) B 1944

* Thomas Warren (1944) B 1944
 * Mr. Mr. Woman (1944) B 1944

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

George Williams, Arthur Whitely, Freddy Jackson, Louis Brown,
 Tremaine, Joe Martin, Joe Toot, Lawrence Brown, Tremaine,
 Johnny Hodges, Al and Supreme Blues, One Hardback, Al and

* Al and Supreme Blues
 * Al and Supreme Blues and Joe Toot

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA

1932

Oso Harbach (*Alto Sax*) added.

Midnight (<i>1932</i>)	Co 3131, Bc 3431
Midnight (<i>1932</i>)	Bc 3431
Swampy Swampy Swampy (<i>1932</i>)	Bc 3132
Swampy Swamp (<i>1932</i>)	Bc 3132

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA

George Williams, Rex Brown, Charlie Allen, Thompson, Lawrence Brown, Juan Tizol, Joe Nanton, Trumbo, Johnny Hodges, Alto and Euphone Saxs, Oso Harbach, Alto Sax, Barney Bigard, Tenor Sax and Clarinet, Harry Carney, Baritone Sax, Duke Ellington, Piano, Fred Guy, Guitar, Hayes Alvin, and/or Billy Taylor, Bass, Sonny Green, Drums, Irie Anderson, * Front.

1933

From Home Again (<i>C 844</i>)	not issued
Amusement (<i>C 845</i>)	not issued
Favorite Blues (<i>C 846</i>)	not issued
Let's Have a Jamboree (<i>C 847</i>)	not issued
Musical Moments (<i>1933</i>)	Bc 3133
Amusement (<i>1933</i>)	Bc 3133
Swampy Swampy (<i>1933</i>)	Bc 3133, Co 3133
Bc A. Amusement. Moon (<i>1933</i>)	Bc 3133, Co 3133
Swampy Swamp (<i>1933</i>)	not issued
From Home Again (<i>1933</i>)	not issued
* Amusement on Tenor 1 (<i>1933</i>)	Bc 3133
* Amusement 1 (<i>1933</i>)	Bc 3133, Co 3133
* Amusement 1 (<i>1933</i>)	Bc 3133
Swampy (<i>1933</i>)	Bc 3133

Arthur Whited (*Trumpet*) in place of Allen.

Amusement on Tenor—Part 1 (<i>1933</i>)	Bc 3133, Co 3133
Amusement on Tenor—Part 2 (<i>1933</i>)	Bc 3133, Co 3133

Irie Whited (*Tenor Sax*) added.

COMPLETE DUKE ELLINGTON DISCOGRAPHY 1935

Amusement on Tenor—Part 1 (<i>1933</i>)	Bc 3133, Co 3133
Amusement on Tenor—Part 2 (<i>1933</i>)	Bc 3133, Co 3133
Swampy Swampy (<i>C 1933</i>)	not issued
Swampy (<i>C 1933</i>)	not issued
Swampy on Clarinet (<i>C 1933</i>)	not issued
Swampy Blues (<i>C 1933</i>)	not issued
I Don't Know Why I Love You (<i>C 1933</i>)	not issued
Swampy Love (<i>C 1933</i>)	not issued

1936

* Don't Love You Anymore Tenor (<i>1936</i>)	Bc 3136
* On Campus Love (<i>1936</i>)	Bc 3136
* Love Is Like a Game (<i>1936</i>)	Bc 3136
* When My Baby Comes Home (<i>1936</i>)	Bc 3136
Clarinet Lament (<i>1936</i>)	Bc 3136
From Home Again (<i>1936</i>)	Bc 3136
* On, Sweet Myra Sweet (<i>1936</i>)	Bc 3136
* Sweet Sweet Love (<i>1936</i>)	Bc 3136
* It Was a Day When I Was Young (<i>1936</i>)	Bc 3136
Bc A. Love (<i>1936</i>)	Bc 3136
Swampy Lament (<i>1936</i>)	Bc 3136
Swampy Love Love (<i>1936</i>)	Bc 3136
Swampy on Tenor (<i>1936</i>)	Bc 3136
Swampy Love (<i>1936</i>)	Bc 3136

DUKE ELLINGTON (Piano Solo)

1937

Music from Amusement	Bc 3137, Co 3137
Swampy Lament, a Swampy Lament, Music	Bc 3137, Co 3137

Persons and/or persons, Irie Anderson, * Front.

I'm Got to Be a Rocker (<i>M 1937</i>)	M 1937, Bc 3137
John Anderson, Harry Carney, Rex Brown, Hayes Alvin, Front.	
The New East of Love Tenor (<i>M 1937</i>)	M 1937, Bc 3137
* Tenor A Love on My Love	M 1937
* It's Sweet on You	M 1937
Swampy on the New Love	M 1937, Bc 3137
New Swampy Swampy	M 1937, Bc 3137
You Can't Run Away from Love	M 1937, Bc 3137
You Love Me When I'm Not	M 1937, Bc 3137

THE SMOKEY WINDS (WM 1943)	Co 32314
ARMSTRONG vs ARMSTRONG (WM 1943)	Co 32314
ARMSTRONG vs ARMSTRONG (WM 1943)	Co 32314
* A LITTLE CO-ED (WM 1943)	Co 32314
LITTLE FLOW (WM 1943)	Co 32314
Love in Luck (WM 1943)	Co 32314
THEIR TROUBLE WAS LOVE (WM 1943)	Co 32314
GREEN (WM 1943)	Co 32314
I KNOW THAT TIME WAS BEING (WM 1943)	Co 32314
WIND (WM 1943)	Co 32314
* YOUR LOVE HAS MADE (WM 1943)	Co 32314
* KISS ME (WM 1943)	Co 32314
CHERRY BLOSSOM (WM 1943)	Co 32314

New York City, February 14, 1943

Have prepared for the release of "Your Love Has Made" and "Kiss Me" (both in place of "Cherry Blossom").

* KISS ME (WM 1943)	Co 32314
* YOUR LOVE HAS MADE (WM 1943)	Co 32314
ARMSTRONG vs ARMSTRONG (WM 1943)	Co 32314
ARMSTRONG vs ARMSTRONG (WM 1943)	Co 32314

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA

George Williams, Wallace Jones, Thompson, Ben Sargent, Conrad, Joe Nathan, Lawrence Brown, John Ford, Trumbo, Johnny Hodges, Alvin and Eugene Bailey, Gus Harlow, Alvin and Eugene Bailey, Peter Lee, Harry Belafonte, Peter Lee and Alvin, Harry Carey, Barbara Lee, Duke Ellington, Peter, Paul, Guy, Charles, Jimmy Blanton, Ben, Harry Brown, George and Barbara, * Ford, Gordon, Jeffrey, J. Ford.

1943

My Country, My Love (1943)	Vi 10100
* All a Little (1943)	Vi 10100
ARMSTRONG vs ARMSTRONG (1943)	Vi 10100
ARMSTRONG vs ARMSTRONG (1943)	Vi 10100
* All a Little (1943)	Vi 10100
* All a Little (1943)	Vi 10100
* All a Little (1943)	Vi 10100
* All a Little (1943)	Vi 10100
* All a Little (1943)	Vi 10100
* All a Little (1943)	Vi 10100

COMPLETE DUKE ELLINGTON DISCOGRAPHY 193

PIANO AND BASS DUETS

Duke Ellington, Piano, Jimmy Blanton, Bass

New York, 1933

Blues (WM 1933)	Co 32314
Blues (WM 1933)	Co 32314

Chicago, October 1, 1933

Blues (WM 1933)	Vi 10100
Blues (WM 1933)	Vi 10100
Blues (WM 1933)	Vi 10100
Blues (WM 1933)	Vi 10100

Previous releases (1933)

Chicago, October 17, 1933

Blues (WM 1933)	Vi 10100
Blues (WM 1933)	Vi 10100

1934

Blues (WM 1934)	Vi 10100
Blues (WM 1934)	Vi 10100

Chicago, October 17, 1934

Blues (WM 1934)	Vi 10100
Blues (WM 1934)	Vi 10100

Chicago, March 4, 1934

Blues (WM 1934)	Vi 10100
Blues (WM 1934)	Vi 10100
Blues (WM 1934)	Vi 10100
Blues (WM 1934)	Vi 10100
Blues (WM 1934)	Vi 10100

Chicago, March 15, 1934

Blues (WM 1934)	Vi 10100
Blues (WM 1934)	Vi 10100
Blues (WM 1934)	Vi 10100

Hollywood, May 4, 1934

Blues (WM 1934)	Vi 10100
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Happy No Lament (That's Got Again Much Any More)

(1937/8)

Vi 17110

Chicago, May 21, 1937

Expensive (1937/8)

Vi 17111

A Fantasy on Baby Williams (1937/8)

Vi 17112

Dark (1937/8)

Vi 17113

Dark Good (1937/8)

Vi 17114

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA

Ray Brown, Cornell, Ray Nance, William Jones, Trumpets, Lew Porter, Brown, Juan Tizol, (on Saxophone, Trombone), Johnny Hodges, Alto and Saxophone Bass, Otto Hardwick, Alto Sax, Ben Webster, Tenor Sax, Harry Shepard, Tenor Sax and Clarinet, Henry Cotton, Baritone, Ray Duke Ellington, Piano, Fred Guy, Guitar, Jimmy Blanton, Bass, Teddy Green, Drums, Lou Anderson,* Marlin Johnson,† Percs, Billy Strayhorn, Piano, on some sides.

Chicago, December 11, 1936

† Flamingo (1937/8)

Vi 17115

† The Girl in My Dreams Tries to Love Like You

(1937/8)

Vi 17116

The Serenade of New York (1937/8)

Vi 17117

Hollywood, February 15, 1937

Take the "A" Train (1937/8)

Vi 17118

Swarm! (1937/8)

Vi 17119

Dark Night (1937/8)

Vi 17120

John Hardy's Blues (1937/8)

Vi 17121

After All (1937/8)

Vi 17122

DUKE ELLINGTON (Piano Solo)

New York City, May 14, 1937

Dark One (1937/8)

Vi 17123

Swarm! (1937/8)

Vi 17124

Hollywood, June 3, 1937

Swarm! (1937/8) (featuring Ray Nance, Fred)

Vi 17125

The Gypsy (1937/8)

Vi 17126

COMPLETE DUKE ELLINGTON DISCOGRAPHY 301

See The Seasonal (1937/8)

Vi 17127

See Afternoon and Afternoon (1937/8)

Vi 17128

The Gypsy (1937/8)

Vi 17129

Hollywood, June 21, 1937

* Christmas (1937/8)

Vi 17130

* I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good (1937/8)

Vi 17131

Hollywood, July 2, 1937

Christmas (1937/8)

Vi 17132

† The Christmas Day (1937/8)

Vi 17133

† (See the) (1937/8)

Vi 17134

More over (1937/8)

Vi 17135

Hollywood, September 21, 1937

Free O'Love (1937/8)

Vi 17136

* Home to My Home (1937/8)

Vi 17137

See the (1937/8) (Ray Nance, Fred)

Vi 17138

Christmas (1937/8)

Vi 17139

Hollywood, December 2, 1937

After the Day, Jr. (1937/8) (in place of Jimmy Blanton)

Vi 17140

Christmas (1937/8)

Vi 17141

There's a Little Bit of Love (1937/8)

Vi 17142

† I Don't Know What Love is (1937/8)

Vi 17143

Christmas (1937/8)

Vi 17144

Chicago, January 12, 1938

Ray Nance doubling on violin on his two sides.

Swarm! (1937/8)

Vi 17145

Take the "A" Train (1937/8)

Vi 17146

After the Day (1937/8)

Vi 17147

New York City, February 11, 1938

After the Day (1937/8)

Vi 17148

† (See the) (1937/8)

Vi 17149

Christmas (1937/8)

Vi 17150

Hollywood, June 21, 1938

† My Little Brown Book (1937/8)

Vi 17151

Dark One (1937/8)

Vi 17152

Johnny's Little Brown Book (1937/8)

Vi 17153

Chicago, July 21, 1932

Clarence Hughes (Trumpet) in Place of Barney Bigard.

* Harlem, Broadway (1932b)	Vi 10099
International Lane (1932b)	Vi 10100
A Star in the Sky (1932c) (Ray Nance, vocal)	Vi 10098
Swanee Street (1932c)	Vi 10097

DUKE ELLINGTON UNITS

BARNEY BIGARD AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Conce Williams, Trumpet, Juan Tizol, Trombone, Barney Bigard, Clarinet, Harry Carey, Saxophone, Duke Ellington, Piano, Fred Guy, Guitar, Billy Taylor, Bass, Sonny Greig, Drums.

December 19, 1931

Canzone (LO 325)	Vi 949, Vi 949a
Swanee Street (LO 324)	Vi 948, Vi 949a
Canzone in My Heart (LO 323)	Vi 947, Vi 949a
Focus Blue (LO 322)	Vi 946, Vi 949a

April 19, 1932

Ray Stewart (Trumpet) in place of Conce Williams.

First and One Half Blues (M 420)	Vi 945, Vi 945a
Looking for a Love Love (M 422)	Vi 946, Vi 945a
Just a La Carte (M 421)	Vi 944, Vi 945a
Blue Tones (M 423)	Vi 943, Vi 945a

June 14, 1932

Get It Straight Away (M 424)	Vi 942, Vi 942a
(Don Mitchell, vocal)	
It Told Me How to Get Along Home (M 425)	Vi 941, Vi 942a
(Don Mitchell, vocal)	
Memphis Blues (M 426)	Vi 940, Vi 942a
Swanee Lake and Swannee (M 427)	Vi 939, Vi 942a

January 19, 1933

Swannee Street (M 428)	Vi 938
It's a Wonderful New Game (M 429)	Vi 937

* Also listed on the Black label with the same number in the Vocalion book.

1933

Barney's Got' Ray (The Original Owl, Grammy)

(M 430)	Vi 936a
March in Blue (M 431)	Vi 935a
Love in Two Faces (M 432)	Vi 934a
Swanee Street (M 433)	Vi 933a
Swanee Street (M 434)	Vi 932a
March in Blue (M 435)	Vi 931a
Just Another Dream (M 436)	Vi 930a
Swanee Street (M 437)	Vi 929a

BARNEY BIGARD AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Ray Nance, Trumpet, Juan Tizol, Trombone, Barney Bigard, Clarinet, Ray Williams, Tenor Sax, Duke Ellington, Piano, Jimmy Blanton, Bass, Billy Greig, Drums.

Chicago, November 11, 1932

Canzone in Blue (1932b)	Vi 1007
A Little of Love (1932c)	Vi 1006
Swanee Street (1932d)	Vi 1005
Swanee Street (1932e)	Vi 1004

Hollywood, September 19, 1932

Harry Carey (Saxophone) in place of Ray Williams and J. Brown (Bass) in place of Jimmy Blanton.

Swanee Street (1932f)	Vi 1003
"C" Blues (1932g)	Vi 1002
Swanee Street (1932h)	
Swanee Street (1932i)	

JOHNNY HODGES AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Conce Williams, Trumpet, Johnny Hodges, Clarinet, Duke Ellington, Piano, Fred Guy, Guitar, Ray Nance, Bass, Sonny Greig, Drums, Billy McLaughlin, * Vocal.

* Also listed on the Black label with the same number in the Vocalion book.

1937

FORNIE' MURDER (M 118)	Ve 524, Ve 1276
YOU'LL NEVER GO TO HAZARD (M 119)	Ve 524, Ve 1276
* A SUMMER IN THE MOONLIGHT (M 120)	Ve 524, Ve 1276
* MY DAD	Ve 1224
* SILVER MOON AND CRIMSON ROSE	Ve 1224

Gus Williams, Trumpet; Lawrence Brown, Trombone; Johnny Hodges, Alto and Soprano Sax; Harry Carey, Baritone Sax; Duke Ellington, Piano; Billy Taylor, Bass; Sonny Green, Drums

1938

In You Walk in My Place (M 121)	Ve 524
I Let a Song Go Out of My Mouth (M 122)	Ve 524
Remember When Rapture (M 123)	Ve 524
JOHN'S BLUES (M 124)	Ve 524
SMOOTH BALLROOM BLUES (M 125)	Ve 524
You Wasted One of Your Partners (M 126)	Ve 524
Lost in Meditation (M 127)	Ve 524
PERADISE (M 128)	Ve 524
A BIRD'S EYE VIEW (M 129)	Ve 524
HYPERBOLIC LULLABY (M 130)	Ve 524
Some Blues Blues (M 131)	Ve 524
There's Something About an Old Love (M 132)	Ve 524
* FADING TO A KISS (M 133)	Ve 524
The Jazz Is Justice (M 134)	Ve 524
Love in Meditation (M 135)	Ve 524
Seasons in the Fall (M 136)	Ve 524
Home Front (M 137)	Ve 524
Memories (M 138)	Ve 524
Let It Be Known (M 139)	Ve 524
Swing on the Blues (M 140)	Ve 524
Let a Song Go Out of My Mouth (M 141) (John Ellington, Piano)	Ve 524
Swing on the Blues (M 142)	Ve 524
Deep Woods (M 143)	Ve 524
Memories (M 144) (John Ellington, Piano)	Ve 524
You Can Count on Me (M 145)	Ve 524
Remember When Rapture (M 146)	Ve 524
Swing on the Blues (M 147)	Ve 524
Home Town Blues (M 148)	Ve 524
The Bluesy Jazz (M 149)	Ve 524
Easy Blues Blues (M 150)	Ve 524

* Also issued on the Okeh label with changes under the Vocalion name.

COMPLETE DUKE ELLINGTON DISCOGRAPHY 105

Easy Street (M 151)	Ve 524
Good Old Blues (M 152)	Ve 524
Remember When Rapture (M 153)	Ve 524
My Heart (Remember When) (M 154)	Ve 524
Remember When (M 155)	Ve 524
I Know What You Do (M 156)	Ve 524
There's Something About an Old Love (M 157)	Ve 524
Home Town Blues (M 158)	Ve 524
You Love Has Blues (M 159)	Ve 524
Home Town Blues (M 160)	Ve 524

JOHNNY HODGES AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Gus Williams, Trumpet; Lawrence Brown, Trombone; Johnny Hodges, Alto Sax; Harry Carey, Baritone Sax; Duke Ellington, Piano; Sonny Green, Drums

Chicago, November 4, 1938

Easy Street (M 161)	Bb 1112
Home Town Blues (M 162)	Bb 1112
Good Old Blues (M 163)	Bb 1112
There's Something About an Old Love (M 164)	Bb 1112

Hollywood, July 3, 1941

Ray Scott (Trumpet) in place of Gus Williams

Square Box (M 165)	Bb 1112
There's Something About an Old Love (M 166)	Bb 1112
Home Town Blues (M 167)	Bb 1112
Good Old Blues (M 168)	Bb 1112

REN STEWART AND HIS SUND STREET STOMPERS

Ren Stewart, Trumpet; Lawrence Brown, Trombone; Johnny Hodges, Alto and Soprano Sax; Harry Carey, Baritone Sax; Duke Ellington, Piano; Gus Williams, Baritone Sax; Billy Taylor, Bass; Sonny Green, Drums

1937

Remember (M 169)	Ve 524, Ve 1276
Easy Blues Blues (M 170)	Ve 524, Ve 1276

* Also issued on the Okeh label with changes under the Vocalion name.

Ben Brown, Frankie Jackson, Trombone, Johnny Hodges, Alto Sax, Harry Carey, Saxophone Solo, Duke Ellington, Piano, Dick Pough, Guitar, Jack Mead, Drums.

The Hot Time (M 194)	Vo 144, Vo 145
The Hot Room (M 195)	Vo 144, Vo 145
Love in My Heart (Grove Room Series) (M 196)	Vo 144, Vo 145
Room Hall Room (M 197)	Vo 144, Vo 145

Ben Brown, Trombone, Joe Nanton, Trombone, Roney Riegel, Clarinet, Duke Ellington, Piano, Billy Taylor, Sax, Sonny Green, Drums.

March 20, 1938

"Far From" (Grove) (M 198)	Vo 144
Hot Room (M 199)	Vo 144
Hot Room (M 200)	Vo 144

REX STEWART AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Rex Stewart, Conductor, Lawrence Brown, Trombone, Ben Webster, Piano Solo, Harry Carey, Saxophone Solo, Duke Ellington, Piano, Jimmy Blanton, Sax, Sonny Green, Drums.

Chicago, November 2, 1937

Wendy A. Song (M 201)	Vo 144
My Heart Is (M 202)	Vo 144
My Heart Is (M 203)	Vo 144
My Heart Is (M 204)	Vo 144

Hollywood, June 2, 1941

Somebody's (M 205)	Vo 144
Somebody's (M 206)	Vo 144
Somebody's (M 207)	Vo 144
Somebody's (M 208)	Vo 144

COOTIE WILLIAMS AND HIS RUG CUTTERS

Cootie Williams, Trombone, Joe Nanton, Trombone, Johnny Hodges, Alto and Saxophone Solo, Harry Carey, Saxophone Solo, Duke Ellington, Piano, Billy Taylor, Sax, Sonny Green, Drums.

*Also listed on the Ellington label with the same number as the "Wendy A. Song."

Ellington, Piano, Fred Guy, Guitar, Sonny Green, Sax, Sonny Green, Drums.

March 1, 1937

Downtown (M 191)	Vo 144, Vo 145
Downtown (M 192)	Vo 144, Vo 145
Downtown (M 193)	Vo 144, Vo 145
Downtown (M 194)	Vo 144, Vo 145
Downtown (M 195)	Vo 144, Vo 145

Cootie Williams, Trombone, Joe Nanton, Trombone, Roney Riegel, Clarinet, Duke Ellington, Piano, Billy Taylor, Sax, Sonny Green, Drums, Jerry Kruger, * Vocal.

October 21, 1937

Downtown (M 196)	Vo 144
Downtown (M 197)	Vo 144
Downtown (M 198)	Vo 144
Downtown (M 199)	Vo 144

Cootie Williams, Trombone, Lawrence Brown, Trombone, Johnny Hodges, Alto and Saxophone Solo, Duke Ellington, Piano, Billy Taylor, Sax, Sonny Green, Drums.

1938

Downtown (M 200)	Vo 144
Downtown (M 201)	Vo 144

Roney Riegel (Trombone) added.

Downtown (M 202)	Vo 144
Downtown (M 203)	Vo 144
Downtown (M 204)	Vo 144
Downtown (M 205)	Vo 144

Also performed with the exception of Fred Guy.

Downtown (M 206)	Vo 144
Downtown (M 207)	Vo 144
Downtown (M 208)	Vo 144
Downtown (M 209)	Vo 144
Downtown (M 210)	Vo 144
Downtown (M 211)	Vo 144
Downtown (M 212)	Vo 144

MOON'S BEAMS (M 1948) Ve 4548
GAS-ANOTHER (M 1947) Ve 4549

Cecil Williams, Frankie Lawrence Brown, Frankie, Johnny Hodges, Al and Seprena Jones, Gus Hardwick, Alvin Lee, Harry Canary, Lawrence Ray, Duke Ellington, Piano, Billy Taylor, Bass, Sonny Green, Drums

1948

AM I THE CHASE GONE (M 1947) (Cecil Williams, Frank) Ve 4548
BROWN BEAMS (M 1948) Ve 4549
BLACK BEAUTY (WM 1948) Ve 4550
HARRY BORN (WM 1947) Ve 4551
HAWKNEY, KANSAS (M 1947) Ve 4552
HOW I GONE (M 1947) (Cecil Williams, Frank) Ve 4553

Cecil Williams, Frankie Lawrence Brown, Frankie, Johnny Hodges, Al and Seprena Jones, Sonny Green, Tenor Sax, Harry Canary, Lawrence Ray, Duke Ellington, Piano, Jimmy Houston, Bass, Sonny Green, Drums

BLACK & WHITE (WM 1947) Ve 4554
BROWN BEAMS (WM 1948) Ve 4555
DAY LONG GO (WM 1948) Ve 4556
GONE TO ME (WM 1948) Ve 4557
THE WAY BEAMS (WM 1948) Ve 4558
TOMMY BEAMS (WM 1948) Ve 4559

RECORDS MADE AT THE APM RECORDING BOX
(January, 1947, to NOVEMBER 1948)

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA

Ray Sawyer, Gerald Ray Nance, Tuli Jordan, Marion Humphill, William Anderson, Frankie, Lawrence Brown, Clark Jones, Joe Nanton, Frankie, Johnny Hodges, Alvin and Seprena Jones, Gus Hardwick, Alvin Lee, Al Sears, Tenor Sax, Jimmy Hamilton, Tenor Sax and Clarinet, Harry Canary, Lawrence Ray and Clarinet, Duke Ellington, Piano, Fred Guy, George, Alvin Raylin, Jr., Bass, Sonny Green, Drums * Tony Stewart, * Ray Nance, * Maceo Ransom, * Albert Hobbins, Piano

New York City, December 1, 1944

1. I Ain't Got Nobody (Ray Nance) Ve 4560
2. I Ain't Got Nobody (Ray Nance) Ve 4561

* Also used on the Blue Bird with the same number as the Vocalion issue.

COMPLETE DUKE ELLINGTON DISCOGRAPHY 349

* The Records to See the Light Ve 4562
* Don't You Know I Care Ve 4563

New York City, December 11, 1944

BLACK, BROWN AND BEAM
WIND BORN
GONE TOMORROW Ve 4564-A
Ve 4565-A

New York City, December 11, 1944

BLACK, BROWN AND BEAM
* THE BLOOD Ve 4566-B
TOMMY BEAM Ve 4567-B

New York City, January 2, 1945

CAROLINE BEAM
* MY HEART BORN Ve 4568-B
BORN TO BE MINE Ve 4569-B
BLACK CLOUTIER

New York City, April 26, 1945

* KANSAS BOY Ve 4570-B

New York City, May 1, 1945

* REVEREND BORN
RAY BEAMS (Ray Nance, Frank) Ve 4571-B
Ve 4572-B

New York City, May 10, 1945

FRANK TO A KID

New York City, May 10, 1945

BLACK AND THE FANTASY
CANTON
MORE BEAMS

New York City, May 14, 1945

Some personnel, with Bob Haggan in place of Alvin Raylin, Jr.
Ray
In A JAZZMANIA, Maceo

Soprano: Lucy

* + [1] In Don's Meas. & Time

Tonight I Shall Sing (Tonight Song, Tenor solo, added)

Wiggins

New York City, May 15, 1941

Same personnel, with Bill Wolfe in place of Allen Rogers, Jr.

Don

* + [1] In Solos

* I Let a Song Go Out of Me (Song)

New York City, May 21, 1941

Personnel unchanged personnel.

BLACK BEAUTY

[1] From Home on the Range

Duke Ellington: Piano, and rhythm.

Piano and Tenor

Jazz: Bill Wolfe

Wiggins

New York City, July 24, 1941

Personnel unchanged personnel.

Piano Solo.

BURNING BURNING

[1] From Home on the Range

New York City, July 25, 1941

Piano Solo

Dancing in Love

Guitar Solo

Tonight's A Winner

Wiggins

New York City, October 8, 1941

Same personnel, with Wilbur Cohen in place of Sonny Green.

Don

* TELL ME WHAT I IN COME TO

* Come to Love Me

Wiggins

Wiggins

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN DISCOGRAPHY

En	Ensemble
Ex	Exotic
Ev	Exotic
Ex	Exotic
Ca	Cameo
Co	Columbia (American)
Co E	Columbia (English)
Co F	Columbia (French)
Da	Dance
Ge	General
Ha	Harp
Ma	Major
Ma	Major
Ob	Orchestra
On	Onion
Pa	Piano
Pa	Piano
Ro	Romance
Va	Variety
Va	Variety
Vi	Vocal
Vi	Vocal
Vi E	Vocal (English)
Vi F	Vocal (French)
Vi E	Vocal (English)

INDEX

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